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MobileBeat

THE MOBILE ENTERTAINER'S MAGAZINE • WWW.MOBILEBEAT.COM

ISSUE 165 SEPTEMBER 2015

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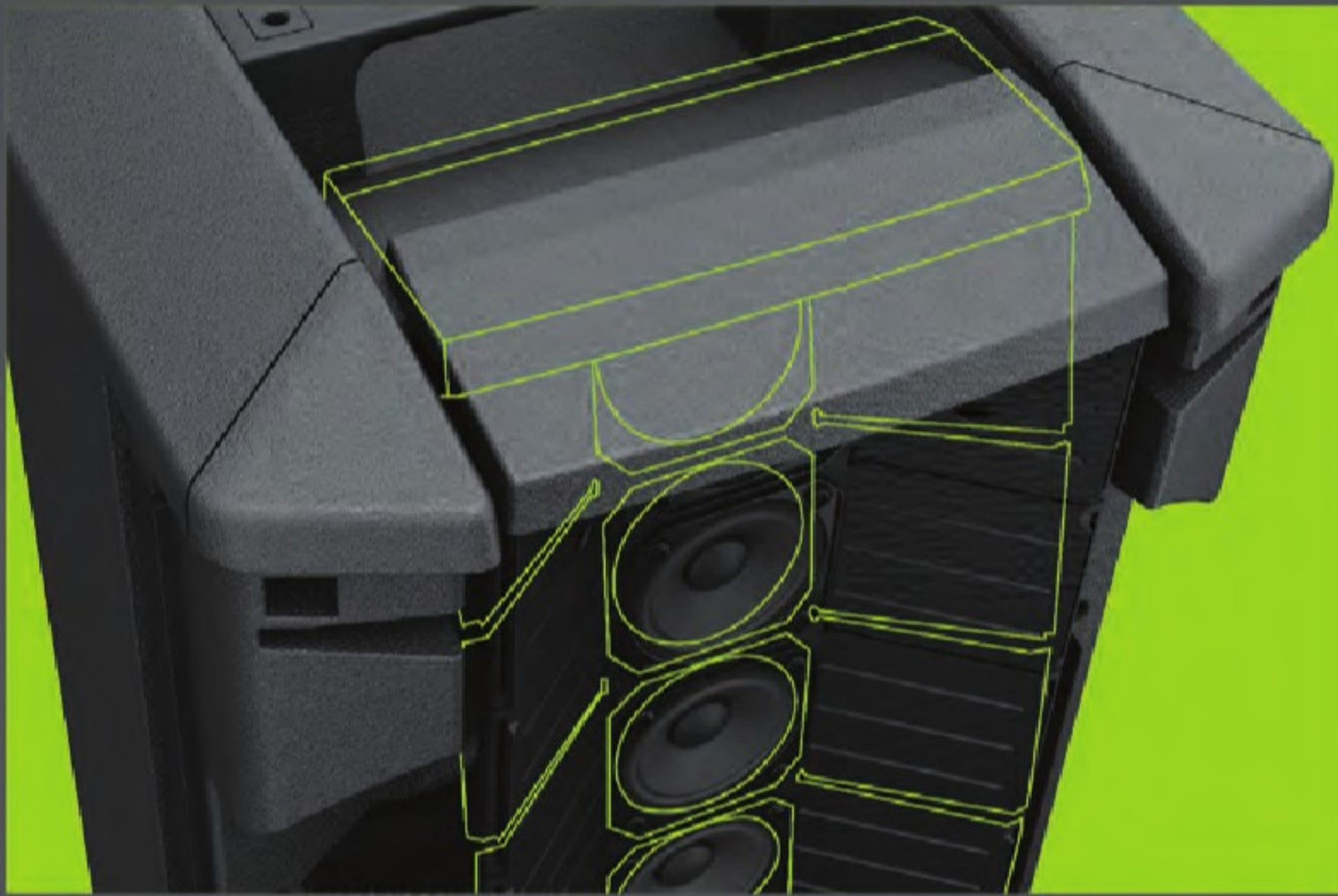
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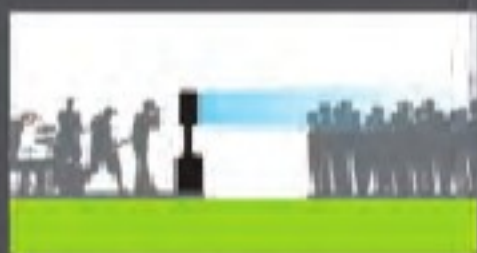


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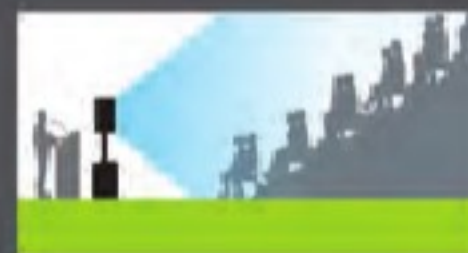
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Getting My Act
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**Attracting
High-Quality
Wedding
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TRACK ONE

Once again, we welcome you to our "Remix Your Biz" issue, in which we offer ideas and inspiration for making positive changes to your business, as well as life in general.

Inside you'll find: an overview of how to handle a complete re-branding from Arnoldo Offermann, whose successful re-brand blew the roof off his company's profits; ideas for "crossing over" to a new weekday market, using kids' after-school programs as an example, courtesy of Keith Alan and Rob Peters; Stephanie Padovani's description of smart ways to attract the highest-quality wedding leads you can, starting with figuring out just who YOUR ideal client actually is; an extensive look at alternatives to the standard DJ management software options by Staci Nichols; a new take on old school snail mail from Joe Bunn; a look at the unique new "Silent Disco" headphone party concept from Jared Kingsley, who is a successful practitioner thereof; and a wrap up of his three-part series on presenting "Big Screen Cinema" mobile movie events, from MB publisher, Ryan Burger.

Along with all this practical info, we also hear personal stories of change and from Mike Ficher (who describes his interesting and wide-ranging career journey) and Stu Chisholm (who shares his trials and triumphs as he rebuilds his system "from the ground up"). Mike Ryan also profiles a non-DJ voice-over artist who offers a lot of good advice for those interested in that field as a potential "remix" of their mic/MC skills.

You'll also find profiles of two industry leaders who have used their skills to help others grow and achieve success. Mitch Taylor is focused on sales and educating entertainers to be better sales people; and John Young has used his *Disc Jockey News* as a tool to help his fellow DJs improve, while also being a unifying force in an easily fragmented industry.

I'm happy to note that we are doing some remixing of our own, after receiving great survey feedback from readers. Many of you asked for the return of basic tech how-to articles, so first up is a piece by Scott Jarema on that oft-neglected part of any sound setup: connectors.

And finally, as we ramp up the celebration through this year, leading up to MBLV20 (Mar. 14-17, 2016 at the Tropicana), we'll be looking back at the 25-year history of the magazine and the 20-year history of Mobile Beat Las Vegas from different angles, with stories in each issue. Kicking off is MB founder Bob Lindquist with the inside story on some classic mag covers. Enjoy...and don't miss the double-anniversary party that MBLV20 will be!

— Dan Walsh, Editor-in-Chief

Mobile Beat

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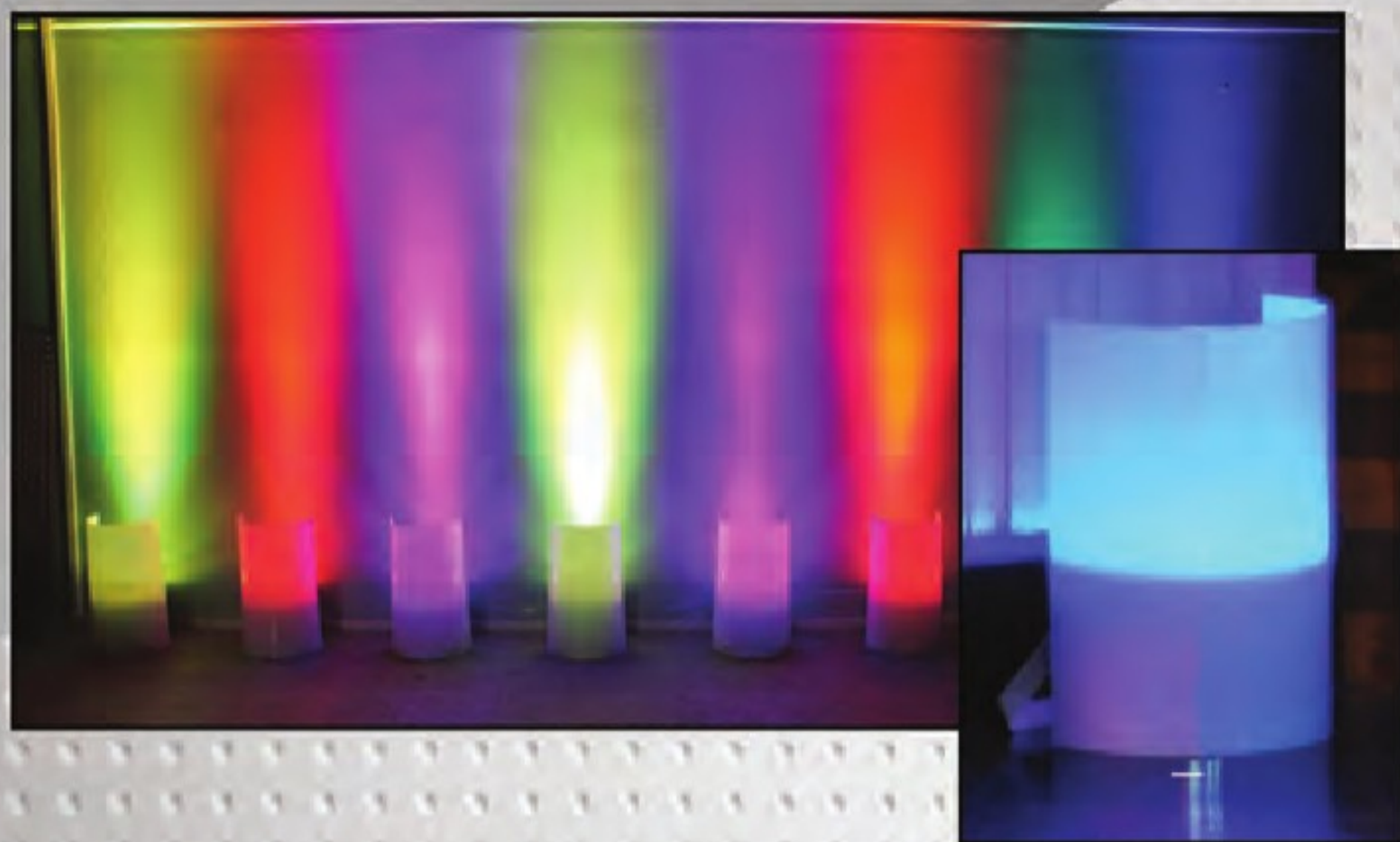
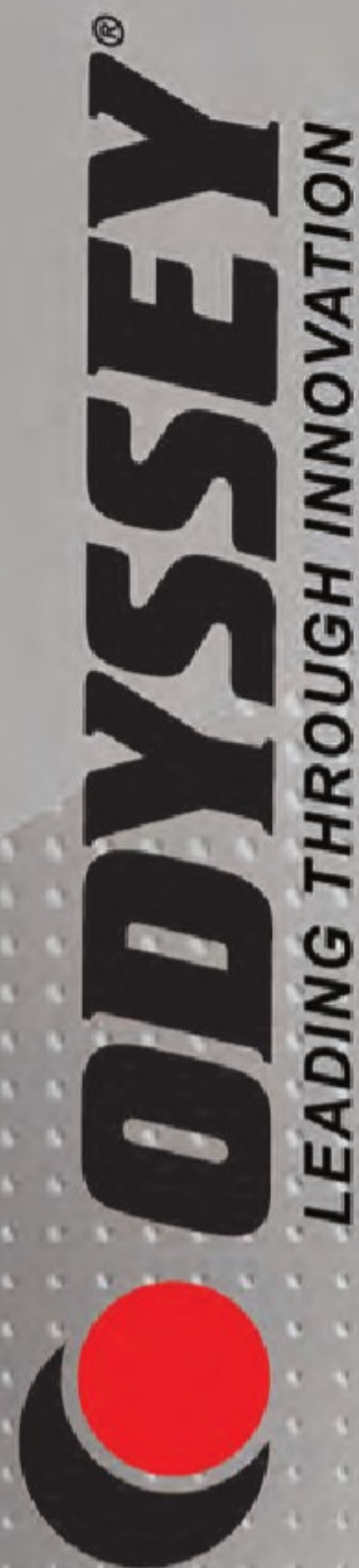
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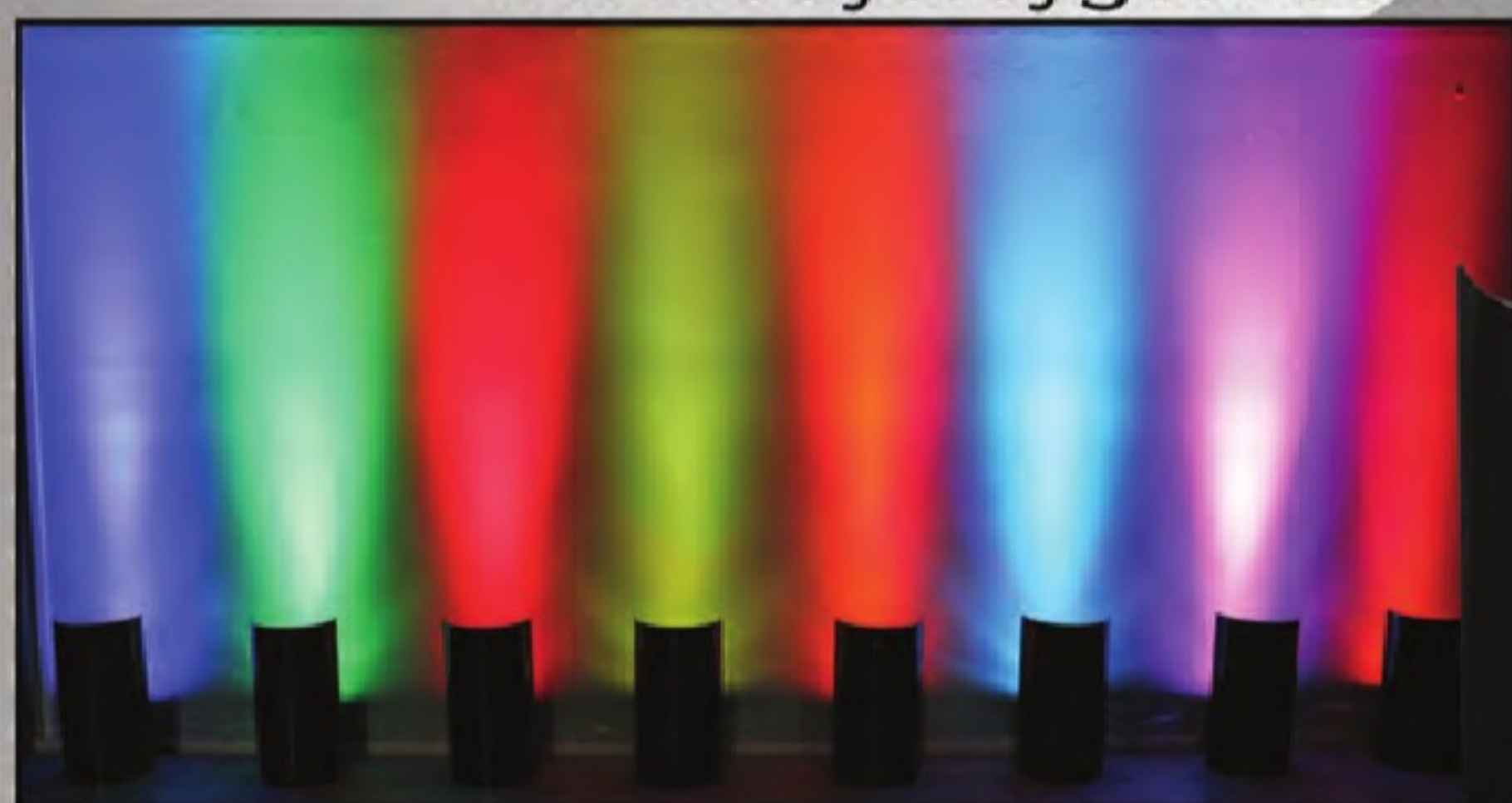


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Anniversary Event Presenters Unveiled

Along with MBLV20's keynote presenter, dynamic speaker John Taffer of TV's *Bar Rescue* and Night Club & Bar, the lion's share of the event's slate of industry experts has been revealed. Details can be found at www.mobilebeatlasvegas.com/presentations/ but here are some highlights:

Todd Mitchem, a past favorite at MB shows and master of audience motivation, returns to MBLV after a long absence, during which he consulted for many top companies and numerous start-

ups. He has focused on leadership development, brand development, public relations, and other areas where guiding people toward viable solutions is the goal.

Mitch Taylor, a 21-year veteran of the mobile DJ Industry, will share the four steps that you must take to achieve success as a mobile DJ, and how to apply each step to different facets of your business. (See our interview with him on page 44 of this issue.)



Mobile Beat founder **Robert Lindquist** will be on hand to talk to the anniversary event audience about the origins of the magazine, the development of the mobile DJ industry as a whole, and where he sees things headed into the future.

Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime MBLV celebration of 25 years of the magazine and 20 years of MBLV. Go to www.mobilebeatlasvegas.com and get your pass today!

CHAUVET DJ to Help MBLV20 Shine

With the announcement that CHAUVET DJ will once again be part of creating the exciting atmosphere at Mobile Beat Las Vegas, the company's



Marketing Manager, Geoffrey Short said, "CHAUVET DJ is always glad to be able to participate in the Mobile Beat show. It's one of the best opportunities of the year for us to connect with the people that not only use our existing products but also help shape future ones. And this year is even more exciting because Mobile Beat will be in a brand new home! We think the move to the Tropicana will be fresh and invigorating! We love the chance to get valuable face to face feedback and exchange learning through the great educational features of the show. Last year we were proud to be the lighting sponsor for the ground breaking "Entertainment Experience" and we're just as excited to share the Experience again this year as the exclusive lighting sponsor of these amazing learning opportunities. We can't wait to see everyone at The Tropicana for



MBLV20!"

Publisher Ryan Burger said, "Mobile Beat is thrilled to have CHAUVET DJ's involvement and their fantastic lighting designer/endorsee Jeremy Brech of DJ Jer Productions on with our educational experience again this year at MBLV20.

More information on CHAUVET DJ can be found at www.chauvetdj.com and check out www.mobilebeatlasvegas.com for the latest announcements about the presenters and other exciting events scheduled to take place on the CHAUVET DJ-lit stage at MBLV20.

EV Speakers Power Epic Wedding Video

The recent wedding of Robert and Teresa Ly of Orlando was a grand event that truly ended on a high note. Relying on Electro-Voice Live X powered loudspeakers to deliver rich, clear audio—along with last-minute instructions for the choreography—the happy couple and their guests danced their way through over seven minutes of popular music to create an epic wedding music video that literally involved all 250 guests at the reception, all in one take and with no rehearsal. (Check it out at www.youtube.com/watch?v=oi1syPvmAWg)

"It was awesome," said DJ Mark Houghton of Orlando DJ & Lighting. "They wanted something unique and fun that involved everyone, and it had to be a surprise. The bride and groom were the only ones



who knew, and we worked together to come up with the music mix. The guests got their instructions in an envelope taped under each table just 10 minutes before the shoot. Everything went as planned."

Between Facebook, YouTube, and other online news and entertainment sites, views have topped 4 million, while viral viewership via shares is likely in the tens of millions. The Ly's, who own Sus Hi Eatstation, ainja-themed Orlando restaurant, are ecstatic.

For the reception, Houghton used two ELX115P mains and one ELX118P subwoofer. He knew sound quality would be key in making the video a success, but wasn't worried.

"The sound of EV loudspeakers actually brings us business," Houghton says. "In fact, we got this job because the wedding planner knows our reputation for sound quality, and Electro-Voice (www.electrovoice.com) is all we use for our PA systems and wireless mics. **MB**



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Covering MB

MB ORIGINATOR REMINISCES ON OLD SCHOOL COVER CREATION

By Robert Lindquist



THE MARINELLI COVERS

Several of the early Mobile Beat covers were illustrations done by a local artist named Jeff Marinelli. It was often easier for Jeff to communicate our ideas with an illustration, as we always tried to inject a little inside humor into the cover art. Two of my favorite Marinelli covers were Issue #12 and Issue #14. Issue #12 was all about country music and country DJs, so for the cover we borrowed a bit from the TV show Hee Haw and displayed a couple of country spinners with a chorus line of dancing pigs. Issue #14 featured a typical wannabe karaoke singer crooning away in (he thinks) the style of Elvis, as the KJ smiles and winks to the reader. Some readers got it, some didn't.

SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL

Way back when Mark Ferrell was still a working DJ, we decided to take a slightly satirical look at why DJs weren't charging what they were worth—or more accurately, why some DJs weren't worth what they were charging—even if they weren't charging all that much. The inspiration for the story came from Mike LaMarca, a

local Rochester, NY DJ who operates Spectrum Sound. Not only did Mike give us the idea

for the story, but he also

agreed to be our "poster child" for cut-rate DJs everywhere. Mike showed up in an ill-fitting suit wearing a bandana, with a sack of goodies from McDonalds ("Would you like fries with that father/daughter dance?"). Following the photo session at a local studio, our Photoshop experts went to work. In the end, we got just what we were looking for—a grainy black and white "hidden camera" look with pixelated facial features. Similar photos inside showed our cut-rate DJ sloppily munching on Big Macs during a gig. Comments from our readers included (and I paraphrase) "Thanks for running a

story on cut-rate DJs, I show it to all my prospects so they can see just what they'll get if they hire my competition!"

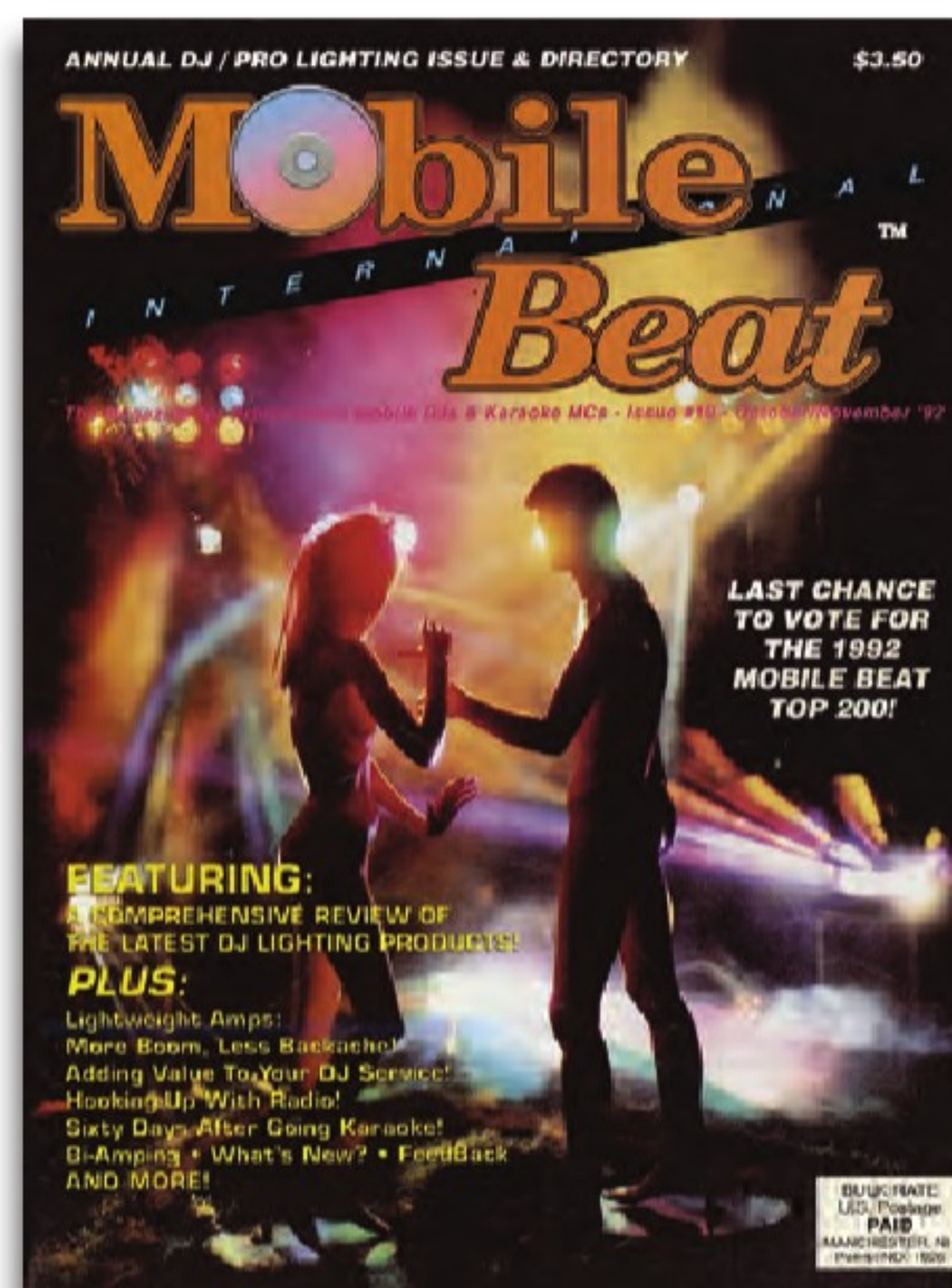
THE MANNEQUIN COVER

During the early years of Mobile Beat, there was an abundance of new technology making its way to the DJ market, especially in the realm of effects lighting. We needed to feature this new technology so we designed an issue around lighting and wanted a cover that would be appropriate. The first thought was to bring our photographer to an actual job, but we had accumulated so much lighting gear, getting it all into a live-action frame

just wasn't going to work.

So, we decided to fake it. I rented two mannequins and set up every lighting effect we had (on loan from Ness, American DJ, Colorado Light N' Sound and Meteor) in the small back yard of my village home. We even had two foggers. After explaining the concept to our photographer and positioning everything appropriately, we waited until it was dark enough to get the shot.

A small crowd of curious neighbors had begun to assemble when we decided it was time to fire everything up. That was about the same time the winds picked up and began knocking things over. Fortunately, nothing broke. When we finally did get everything stabilized, the circuit breakers began flipping. With someone stationed by the breaker box, the photographer began clicking away. Then the police showed up; apparently all that fog and bright lighting looked pretty much like a fire and someone had called it in.



It took a couple of hours until we were finally confident that the shot we wanted was somewhere on one of the spent rolls of film. It was then that the photographer gave me a lesson in perspective, "You know, I could have gotten the same shot with Barbie and Ken dolls."

The final side note is that we had thought about dressing the mannequins, but figured it might be a bit more provocative to leave them unclothed. Against the background of darkness, fog and lights, they looked more realistic than we had envisioned, and quite a few readers actually thought we had hired nude models for the shot. **MB**



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Predicting the Future

WHICH TUNES WILL STAND THE TEST OF TIME?

By Jay Maxwell

Some sounds are unmistakable. One distinctive sound that I miss is the hiss and soft crackle made during the few brief moments when the turntable's needle first hits the vinyl record before it reaches the first note of the song. Although considered by most to be noise, for me this sound indicated that the magic of the needle traveling along the groove was about to produce music from my favorite artist as I imagined the band performing right in my living room. It was always a spectacular experience to hear the transition from the popping noise to the ecstasy delivered to the ears upon hearing the first guitar riff or bass beat. At one time in my life, there was no greater joy than buying a new album, holding it in my hands to enjoy the intricacies of the 12"x12" cover art, gently removing the thin plastic wrapping and then carefully sliding the record out of its sleeve to lay it on the player for its first spin.

If someone had told me when I first started DJing there would come a day when music companies would not sell vinyl, I would have found it hard to believe. It came as quite a surprise to me when stores started selling music on a compact disc format. Gone was the hiss and pop at the beginning of a song; in return was the clear sound of the music regardless of how many times you played the song. Predicting the future is difficult. Certainly, I could not imagine many years ago that a future music format would not allow you to hold it. I would have thought the craziest idea in the world was to "own" music that you could not touch. Now, my iPad holds nearly 8,000 songs. I cannot touch any of the songs, yet at

a touch of a virtual button, my virtual turntable will spin the same songs I bought 40 years ago. You can completely cover the iPad with just one album cover, yet the amount of music that it contains is immense compared to the ten typical tracks found on a record.

Equally difficult to predict are what songs will still be requested in the future to get people dancing on the dance floor. Forty years ago, it would have been impossible to convince me that "Play that Funky Music" (Wild Cherry) or "Boogie Shoes" (K.C. and the Sunshine Band) would still be two of the most-requested songs at any party in 2015. In my past, when I placed the album on the turntable, I would try to predict which songs would become radio hits. Often, my predictions were wrong. Now when a new song hits the charts and I start playing it at an event, I

try to predict the tune's staying power. Will the song be a hit like "Harlem Shake" (Bauer) that smokes the dance floor for a season, and then relegated to novelty status, returning only for reunion parties? On the other hand, will it be a song like the "Wobble" (V.I.C.) having the staying power of the "Twist" (Chubby Checker)?

This issue's list consists of the hottest dance floor songs for the past two years that I predict will still be getting people on the dance floor five, ten, perhaps even 40 years from now. I imagine "Uptown Funk" played as often as "Yeah" (Usher) or "Celebration" (Kool & the Gang) decades from today. To think that "At Last" (Etta James) is still a wedding first dance standard after nearly 60 years is incredible. Will John Legend's "All of Me" have the same effect on couples half a century from now? My prediction is that "Shut Up and Dance" will become as popular as "Love Shack" (B-52s), that Maroon 5's "Sugar" will become a cake-cutting song of choice, and that "Summer" (Calvin Harris) gets played at every pool party for the next several years. Of course, whether my predictions come

true will only be known in due time. That is why I am promising to write this same article again in 40 years—when I am 96 years old—to see which of these songs are still capable of getting people on the dance floor when they yell, "Play Something We Can Dance To!" **MB**



Mobile Beat's resident musicologist since 1992 (issue #11), Jay Maxwell runs the multi-talent entertainment company, Jay Maxwell's Music by Request, LLC, in Charleston, South Carolina. He is also a professor of Business at Charleston Southern University. His passion for detail and continuous research of clients' requests can be found not only in this column, but also in his annually updated music guide, *Play Something We Can Dance To*.

SONG LIST ON PAGE 14 >

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PLAY SOMETHING WE CAN DANCE TO!

JAY'S STAYING-POWER PREDICITONS, 2015

	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	CATEGORY	YEAR	BPM
1	UPTOWN FUNK	MARS, BRUNO/MARK RANSON	PARTY	2014	115
2	HAPPY	WILLIAMS, PHARRELL	PARTY	2014	80
3	SHAKE IT OFF	SWIFT, TAYLOR	PARTY	2014	80
4	BLURRED LINES	THICKE,ROBIN / PHARRELL	PARTY	2013	60
5	ALL OF ME	LEGEND, JOHN	LIFETIMELOVE	2014	63
6	TURN DOWN FOR WHAT	DJ SNAKE / LIL JON	PARTY	2014	100
7	ALL ABOUT THAT BASS	TRAINOR, MEGHAN	PARTY	2014	67
8	THINKING OUT LOUD	SHEERAN, ED	Wedding	2015	79
9	WATCH ME (WHIP / NAE NAE)	SILENTO	PARTY	2015	140
10	FIREBALL	PITBULL	PARTY	2014	123
11	TIMBER	PITBULL / KESHA	PARTY	2013	130
12	SCREAM & SHOUT	Will.I.Am / BRITNEY SPEARS	PARTY	2013	130
13	SHUT UP AND DANCE	WALK THE MOON	PARTY	2015	128
14	THRIFT SHOP	MACKLEMORE	PARTY	2013	95
15	SUIT & TIE	TIMBERLAKE, JUSTIN	PARTY	2013	102
16	FANCY	AZALEA, IGGY	HIPHOPfresh	2014	95
17	SUGAR	MAROON 5	HOT HITS	2015	120
18	GD&R (GOIN' DOWN FOR REAL)	FLO RIDA	HOT HITS	2015	146
19	PROBLEM	GRANDE, ARIANA	HOT HITS	2014	103
20	TREASURE	MARS, BRUNO	PARTY	2013	116
21	TALK DIRTY TO ME	DERULO, JASON	PARTY	2014	101
22	BEST DAY OF MY LIFE	AMERICAN AUTHORS	HOT HITS	2013	100
23	I LOVE IT	ICONA POP	HOT HITS	2013	126
24	HEY PRETTY GIRL	MOORE, KIP	LIFETIMELOVE	2013	86
25	WAGON WHEEL	RUCKER, DARIUS	PARTY	2013	146
26	GET LUCKY	DAFT PUNK/PHARRELL	PARTY	2013	116
27	FEEL THIS MOMENT	PITBULL	PARTY	2013	136
28	CRUISE	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	FASTCOUN	2013	74
29	HONEY I'M GOOD	GRAMMER, ANDY	PARTY	2015	123
30	WANT TO WANT ME	DERULO, JASON	HOT HITS	2015	114
31	LOVE NEVER FELT SO GOOD	JACKSON / TIMBERLAKE	HOT HITS	2014	118
32	SUMMER	HARRIS, CALVIN	HOT HITS	2014	128
33	I DON'T DANCE	BRICE, LEE	Wedding	2014	92
34	I NEED YOUR LOVE	HARRIS, CALVIN	HOT HITS	2013	125
35	CAN'T HOLD US	MACKLEMORE	PARTY	2013	73
36	TONIGHT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU	ALDEAN, JASON	SLOWCOUN	2014	85
37	STAY WITH ME	SMITH, SAM	SLOW2000	2014	85
38	RATHER BE	CLEAN BANDIT	HOT HITS	2014	121
39	BANG BANG	JESSIE J/ARIANA GRANDE	HOT HITS	2014	75
40	DANCE WITH ME TONIGHT	MURS, OLLY	HOT HITS	2013	82



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Picture This

SO, WHO REALLY OWNS THE IMAGERY?

By Matt Martindale

In my last article (“The Unplugged Wedding,” *MB*, May 2015), we talked about taking photos at events and the MC/DJ’s role in announcing (and expected to enforce) this ongoing trend of a tech-free wedding. We also explored the history of how this got started, the many persuasive arguments used by photographers and coordinators to sway brides into thinking they want unplugged weddings, and moreover, why this whole trend is just silly. I closed out the article with my thoughts on how to deal with this trend and keep us, as the visible MCs/spokespeople, out of hot water.

Now, let’s explore the topic of photos a little more. WARNING: This may be controversial!

PHOTO CONTEST

So, if you attended the game-changing 19th annual Mobile Beat conference in February 2015, then let me ask, who “owns” these photos?



- a. SCE Events (the lighting supplier)
- b. The Riviera hotel
- c. Jason Jani
- d. Mobile Beat (the show producer)
- e. The person who took it



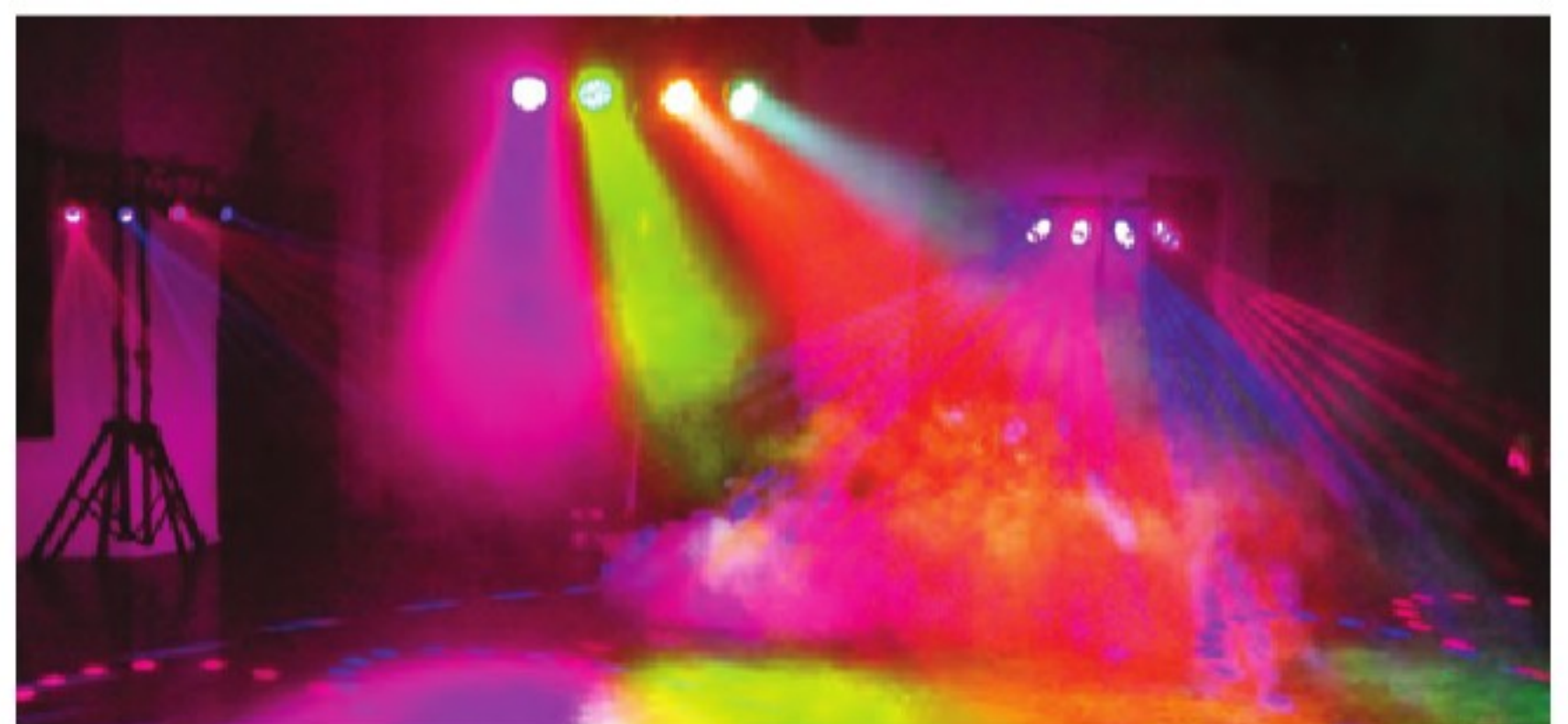
- a. The lighting designer / contractor
- b. The Tropicana Hotel
- c. Mobile Beat (the client that booked the room for the event)
- d. The person who took it



- a. The lighting contractor
- b. The Tropicana Hotel
- c. DJ Jazzy Jeff
- d. Mobile Beat (the client that booked the room for the event)
- e. The person who took it



- a. The flower farmer
- b. The florist
- c. The venue
- d. The person who took it



- a. The DJ / lighting contractor
- b. The hotel
- c. The bride and groom
- d. The person who took it

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The truth is, the person who took the photo is the ONLY person with any actual rights of ownership. This intellectual property right presides over ownership, and thus states that “you can control how the material you create is copied or distributed.”

This ownership is, in effect, created when the original work (like a photo) is created. Translation: when the button is pushed. This creation becomes “a tangible form that can be perceived, reproduced or communicated in any form.”

Simply put: The person that took the photo owns the photo. The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act of 1988 states that “the author of a photograph is the person who creates it. The author will be the first holder of the copyright in the photograph unless this was created in the course of employment; in which case the employer will own the copyright.”

WAIT, WHAT ABOUT THE CREATION OF THE LIGHTING?

I know what you’re thinking...how does this relate to DJing an event?

One word. Lighting.

Lighting creates or enhances an environment.

Does that then lead us into the realm of creativity and rights for the person involved in creating the environment for a photograph....like lighting, decor, fog, etc even though they don’t take the actual photo?

Does the lighting designer, lighting tech, DJ or venue “own” any photos of the lighting set up for a specific event even though they didn’t take the photo?

So, why all the fuss?

The primary reason is economic.

Many photographers, DJs and lighting/production companies I’ve interviewed feel that since they invest a lot of time, creativity and hard work that goes into setting up the “right environment” with lighting, or building the “right moment” at an event (like the perfect voice over by dad brilliantly edited into the first dance to generate a room filled with emotion), then they feel they want to capitalize in retaining the integrity of their work and thereby, all rights of ownership, even if they didn’t take the photo.

Yep, DJs are whining non-stop that a photographer sent somebody a photograph with their lighting in it for their use in a publication, website or promotion. It’s also like asking then, “does the DJ own the photo of the special moment the DJ specifically creates for the father/daughter dance that the photographer took?” No. What about a florist who provides centerpieces and the photographer takes a photo of bridesmaids holding flowers? Does the florist own the photo? No. So, then why do DJs and lighting/production companies passionately argue at what seems to be at every forum, conference and convention that they “own” a photo of lighting from an event they did, even if they didn’t take the photo?

Honestly, my two cents: If you didn’t take the photos, let it go and move on. If you did, then take and use your own photos—problem solved. (Please refer to my article on “The Unplugged Wedding” in the May *MB* before doing so.)

As a side note, DJs and lighting/production houses, please note, this is NOT a license to steal photos online. So seriously: Stop! Rather, take your own photos and be proud of your own work. If you don’t have photos, then simply ask the owner (the person who took the photo) for permission to use a photo. Stop the stealing!

Lastly, brilliant intellectual property attorney Kevin Houchin says, “The issue comes down to practicalities, professionalism and service motivations relative to the event. Things as simple as cell phones that take photos are way ahead of copyright laws. The reality is that lighting pros are paid to create an environment. The way I see it, just do a good job, get paid a fair fee and move on to the next event. If people try to copy you, fine. If they can do just as well, you are not offering as good of service as you think. Prove your value with great work at a great value. That should be enough to keep your competition at bay. If it’s not, the problem really isn’t an issue of protecting your ideas, but rather, it’s a problem of you not being better than the other guy—or at least not better enough for the client to see a difference.” **MB**

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Remixing for Crossover Success

By Rob Peters and Keith Alan

Today's music seems to get reinvented over and over, depending on the formats different artists are trying to target. A song can be originally recorded for the Pop charts, then can be remixed to hit the Dance format, recorded acoustically for AC or can even cross over to Country! You, as an entertainer, can do the same thing. All you need to do is this, think of something that people want and give it to them.

weddings and we also have a good number of Sunday weddings. But I like to try to keep Sunday for family time. So, I'm limited to about 110 days to work. Or 2) think of it as an opportunity to fill the roughly 200 additional dates! I took B and started thinking outside the "typical DJ" box. As a result, we created our "Campardy" program. We are now at roughly 70 events over the seven-week summer camp season. It's a continuous work-in-progress and sometimes a challenge, but I enjoy every event I do.

So here's a challenge for you. I'm going to present you with a need and let's see how you can fill it. According to United States Census Bureau (<https://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/families.html>), the average number of children under 18 per family is between 1.5 and 2.0. Our society has become dependant on dual incomes per household and many of these jobs will not allow a parent to work according to the children's school schedule. What happens to the children between school dismissal and the end of parents' work hours? The answer is that they go to after-school programs and drop-in centers. These facilities handle a variety of ages, but most of them serve the elementary school level.

Did you know that these centers also hire entertainers of different types to come in? Well, they do! What can YOU offer them? Can you offer them a game show? Maybe a Bubble Party? Or a dance party? Could you build a stable of magicians, artists, henna tattoo artists and others—and become their booking agent? And then there are the early dismissal days. These dates are high-demand dates.

If you live near a military installation, you have a lot of youth work opportunity. They have rules about kids being left home under a certain age. Let's use Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio as an example (it was a random pick). This base has four Child Development Centers and they ALL offer after-school programs and activities. Once you get into one of these centers and you do a good job at whatever you do, you will have repeat business.

I am not telling you that you have to go out and build a better mousetrap here. What you do as an entertainer may be what the client is looking for. Just remember, as an artist remixes a song to fit a format, you can remix your business to fill the need. **MB**



There are only 52 weekends in the year. As a small, full-time company here in CT, I could look at this two ways: 1) Here in the northeast, Friday weddings are the second busiest slot for



Keith Alan has been in the DJ biz since 1975, started hosting weddings in 1982 and went full-time in 1993. While hosting over 60 weddings a year on the weekends, his mid-week programs generate income through out the year. Outside of the weddings division of Keith Alan Productions, Keith's summer program, Campardy™ has grown from 1 event in 2000, to 75 events within a 6 week window! He is busy with game shows, trivia, photo booths and extreme bingo the other 46 weeks of the year.



For over 25 years, Rob Peters has been entertaining audiences of all ages, at weddings, corporate events, kids' parties and more. Rob started DJing in 1987 and went full time in 1998. He began doing kids' events in 2006, and now performs for over 100 weekday parties each summer. He is the co-owner of Rob Peters Entertainment in Braintree, MA, and runs Bubble Parties, a business program that helps DJs increase their youth event revenue. He is also a seminar presenter and author of *The Business Of Mobile DJing* from ProDJ Publishing.

Which of these products is proven to Increase entertainer's bottom line?



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Re-Branding 101

HOW-TO, FROM THE TRENCHES

By Arnoldo Offerman

With this issue's overall theme being "remixing your business," I immediately thought about re-branding, as we went through a serious re-brand a year ago.

First, I want to start with an excerpt from my book *R U Rockin' With the Best?! (The 4SchoolsOnly Story to help you Master School Dances)*:

It wasn't but 7 years before the time of writing this that 4SchoolsOnly wasn't even thought of. I was just a normal employee who nabbed a job as a DJ and then moved to working as a full-time sales person and entertainer. Our largest school package was \$1,395-\$1,500 and it was called the Digital DVD Experience. This was basically an amped up wedding package that went from the 8' x 8' Global Truss arch setup to a 10' x 10' 12" Global Truss rig. The larger truss wasn't even considered, but Kelly, the CEO, saw the 30' of truss in the small storage area and said "What am I going to do with all this?" We had 4-6 American DJ Pocket Scans, and 250W flood lights. We added a Martin Acrobat and a few things here and there, but it was a slow process. Of course, DMX wasn't even something we put in as a thought. On either side of the glorious setup was a 5' x 7' video screen. Projectors back then were huge and filled up said screen with an amazing 1000-1500 lumens of output from 15'-30' away. My, how times have changed.

Anyhow, the Digital DVD Experience grew to include live video along with music videos, played with the Numark video mixer and dual DVD player. This was pretty new technology, but it was shiny and we had to have it! Yeah, we were big and bad in this area, and we were ready to let every school know about it. I made custom DVDs with tons of video and info and sent it to each school in the county. How custom were they? The intro and video screen had the school's name, colors, mascot, etc. It was a ridiculous, time-wasting effort that was worth it. Why? This helped mold the rest of the company's promo history. Every new video, website, flyer, business card, and other promotional piece was created with these videos in mind. I learned so much about properly marketing to schools thanks to the feedback I got from students and teachers.

At this point, 4SchoolsOnly wasn't even thought of. We were just A Premier Entertainment "creating the high school dance of a lifetime" or some other cheesy crap like that. I couldn't find a tagline that really worked. I also couldn't market to schools when we had the well-earned reputation as the

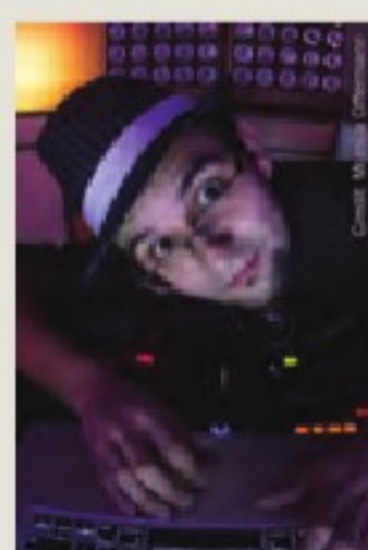
leading wedding DJ company. We had to re-brand without harming the brand either way. This all fell in place thanks to John Young. On a flight to The Disc Jockey News Northern DJ Convention, I was playing around with a website to target just schools and came up with the name 4 Schools Only. This eventually would be changed to 4SchoolsOnly because spaces are so mainstream. I showed the idea to Kelly, complete with an entire mini-business plan for the division. It was the most productive 3 hour flight in the history of mankind. He liked what I showed him and said "Run with it." Needless to say, a new division was born, and would remain a small division for a bit, but that all changed thanks to one special school.

This school was special and they helped us grow like never before. They called us asking for information, which got my attention as we hadn't hit them with marketing yet; come to think of it, that area wasn't even near our radar yet. It was only 45 minutes away, but I didn't focus that hard on those areas. It turns out that another DJ mocked us the moment that the sponsor mentioned our website. He called the company "inferior wedding DJs" and called me just a "skating rink DJ." Ironic, I thought, as he started out at an even smaller skating rink as a skate room attendant, not a DJ. Yes, indeed, a rival skating rink DJ back from when I was 15 was going to be our competition. This should be interesting.

But still, this fueled the drive to make something new with our setups. Kelly and I put everything that 4SchoolsOnly had together, as well as buying 50 more feet of truss and named it after their mascot. With a price tag of \$5,000, more than double of our other packages, we set up a small rig in the cafeteria to show the students how lights, sound, bass, and music all came together for one incredible experience. Yes, at this point we have been dabbling with DMX and got pretty good at it for such a short amount of time.

They booked. Of course they did, how could they not? It was the most incredible sales experience at that point in my life; we went in with a BANG and left with a DOUBLE BAM! We were giddy like school girls and couldn't stop talking about it. This couldn't be the only school, right? There HAVE to be more...more schools will buy \$5,000 packages with a catchy name after their mascot. Indeed they did.

This package was growing in popularity and we saw more schools jumping on it! The cool factor of naming it after their mascot stuck until I had a school whose mascot was the lamest thing I could think of. I thought, "Yup, I can't make



Arnoldo Offermann is the creator of the video series **Master School Dances** and author of **R U Rockin' with the Best?! He has helped DJs worldwide become market leaders in school dances. In a soft economy flooded with \$500 school dance DJs, Arnoldo enjoys watching 4SchoolsOnly yield dances of 10-20x that price tag. Learn more about his wildly successful series packed with ideas that actually work at www.MasterSchoolDances.com.**



that sound cool." It was time to brainstorm; I needed a good name, and quick!

Danity Kane's "Showstopper" played on the radio.

A light went on in my head. This was timing at its best.

For us, the rest is history. The Original Showstopper is still, to this day, one of the most popular packages we sell.

I've re-branded everything, but the Showstopper name still exists. I change things up every year at least; text on website, photos, promo video updates, company policies. Many of these are simple brand refreshes or updates, but a complete re-brand is exactly that.

It is the biggest deal for your company. Don't take this lightly!

Let's take a look at some key items and a brief explanation as to why they're important.

But first, why re-brand?

RE-BRANDING KEEPS YOUR IMAGE UP-TO-DATE. FRESH, RENEWED, CONNECTS WITH YOUR TARGET MARKET

Chances are your target market stays the same age while you don't. This is why I recommend NEVER using any terms that are part of current trends for a slogan or company name. "YOLO"

and "Swag" are played out and "Turnt Up" is on its way out. Any marketing material that makes references to these terms is pretty much dead. Weddings and corporate are a bit easier as these terms aren't usually used in that market. However, it's still good to see what's happening in pop culture and make sure your branding fits in. For example, 2013-2014 saw a massive trend in minimizing. Bold strokes, embosses, and overall flashy text decoration were all stripped. Google, Apple and Microsoft all flattened their logos and websites everywhere used bold colors, big text fonts, and a much cleaner, leaner design. 2015 seems to keep up on this trend but strips always the multi-color approach and sticks with only one or two bold colors.

RE-BRANDING FORCES YOU TO REMOVE THINGS THAT AREN'T WORKING

If it doesn't work, scrap it. That's it—there's not much to add. I will say from personal experience that if you do your own marketing work, it's easy to fall in love with an idea and thus it's almost an impossibility to scrap it without it feeling like a breakup. But break up you must.

RE-BRANDING HELPS YOU REMOVE DATED MATERIAL AND PASSÉ FADS FROM YOUR MARKETING

Remember the references above to Yolo and Swag? If you did something like this—shame on you. Don't do it again. Still, there

are other elements that get outdated. Remember that time when DJs thought bringing in a chocolate fountain was a great idea? If those photos are on your website, kill it with fire. Stuff like this dates your website and thus makes your company seem outdated and not in touch with current trends.

MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR COMPANIES RE-BRAND—YOU SHOULD, TOO

Look at how many companies re-brand, some as much as every other year. Apple, Google, AT&T, Burberry, McDonalds, and the

If your business name is “Bob’s Rockin’ Tunez” and you want to target anything besides bars and backyard parties—time to change names. If you want to target high-end weddings and your name is “Kickass Entertainment” well...you know what to do.

LOGO

You know that website where you can get things like logos for \$5? DON'T YOU DARE! If you want to get an affordable logo that looks and feels like its worth thousands, try out 48HoursLogo.com. The logo designer I found there is so good I book him directly

now. You can, too. In my opinion, he's the best one on the site. His name is Vasilis and his email is boybud40@yahoo.com. Tell him I sent you. I let him take the reigns on the logo. The concept of integrating my 4SO acronym into the logo was his idea, and it came out DAMN good!

COLORS

I've written about color psychology before, so I won't get too much into it. A quick Google search will answer a lot. Long story short: spend hours, even days picking out your colors. Do NOT rush into this!

WEBSITE DESIGN AND COPY

New logo and new colors mean a new website. Start from the ground up! Re-do all your copy (text), rev up your calls to action, and choose new photos!

PHOTOS

Speaking of photos, get all new ones! Anything grainy, blurry or that has a date stamped on it NEEDS TO GO. Remove it. Get and learn how to use a DSLR (I teach this in *DJ-Speak* by the way) and lose all iPhone photos. Your photos and video are the biggest first impression anyone could give. Step it up!

FLYERS, BUSINESS CARDS, HANDOUTS

Once you do the above, the overall marketing becomes easy. Your flyers, cards, and website should all look like they belong together. (Shameless plug: My video series teaches this! MasterSchoolDances.com)

However, the most successful re-brands involve more than just the tangible items. Take a look at your company philosophy, has it changed? What about the entire shopping process? From the moment they call you to the actual contract signing, does the overall experience feel fresh, modern, and sleek? If not, you need to look hard and heavy into ways to renovate it. What about your mission statement, your sales pitch, and even how you dress? All this is part of a successful re-brand.

...Or you could just keep doing the same thing over and over again. What's the definition of insanity again? **MB**



list goes on and on. They will undoubtedly spend more money and put in more time and resources to their re-brand than you or I will, but that's further motivation as to why we should re-brand. If the “big guys” do it for survival, then you should, too!

IT BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO A FAILING OR STRUGGLING BUSINESS

McDonald's went through a slump of “only fatty foods” and wasn't the cleanest place to eat. In my opinion, those facts are still there but their recent re-brand has made the place cleaner, livelier, and is almost like eating at Starbucks! Harley-Davidson almost went bankrupt, but a re-brand quickly changed all that. I'm not saying your business is failing or struggling, but re-branding can take a bad scenario and make it great; imagine what it can do when you are doing well to begin with!

Now that we know WHY, let's talk about the how! First, realize that a complete re-brand isn't cheap because you shouldn't skip a single thing. So, what exactly should be in your re-brand?

NAME & SLOGAN (OPTIONAL)

On my first re-brand, I created the name 4SchoolsOnly. That's not going to change. The point of a re-brand is to keep a current company name fresh and change its current marketing path.

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Remixing Your DJ CRM & Planning Programs

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO TECHNOLOGY FOR MANAGING YOUR DJ BUSINESS

By Staci Nichols

Last year, I fell down the Word Press rabbit hole...and realized I'd been driving in the slow lane on the freeway for way too long. All of the amazing features and plug-ins (like smartphone apps) made me realize that my current DJ management software was no longer working for me. I had never realized there were options beyond DJ Intelligence and DJ Event Planner, but there are many.

First, I tried some of the project management Word Press plug-ins like Project Panorama (one time fee of less than \$100). The visual improvement of Project Panorama on my website was jaw-dropping. In order to continue to attract top-notch brides and grooms and keep growing my business, I knew it was imperative that my website looked like a million bucks. I eventually moved on from Project Panormana due to problems with JotForm, which I was using for clients to complete their planning questionnaires—no reflection on the plug-in. If you are a single-op looking for a Word Press solution, you might also try Mobile DJ Manager (also a one-time fee of less than \$100). Unfortunately, I have non-DJ employees, so it did not work for me. The pros included cost, ease of use, fabulous and fast tech support. On the downside, I had to use a separate CRM (customer relation management) program, which diluted the cost benefit and added complication.



I also looked into a wedding planning program I discovered at the Wedding MBA called the Ava Method. As I was trying to get away from relying on JotForm for my planning questionnaires, I needed something that allowed me to create questionnaires that did not have to be filled out from start to finish in one sitting. While programs like the Ava Method were worth checking out due to otherwise being seamless for my needs, the cost was \$100/month instead of a one-time flat fee of \$100 like Project Panorama. I kept looking.

future. Aisle Planner is a more established system and was \$30 cheaper/month than the Ava Method, but...still no way to incorporate planning questionnaires that we DJs need.

Another up-and-coming planning program is Honey Book. They have just recently added planning questionnaires, but, unfortunately, they only offer textboxes for the answers (no drop-downs, radio buttons, or check boxes). Honey Book has a very interesting pricing model as they are a start-up: a flat fee of \$500 gives you lifetime access regardless of how many employees you have or how many events you handle annually. While Honey Book integrates contracts, invoicing, and proposals seamlessly, it does not include a financial management tool for tracking expenses.

Like Honey Book, Planning Pod (my current system) also just added questionnaires. Planning Pod has been around for longer and definitely has the look and

I really fell in love with Aisle Planner. Again, like Project Panorama, it was visually stunning, modern, and deserving of the type of clients I want to continue attracting in the



DJ and Officiant Staci Nichols owns Revolution Weddings and Country Wedding DJ in San Diego. Her wedding know-how has appeared on Wed Loft, Offbeat Bride, Wedding Planner Magazine and others. She has a B.A. from the University of Redlands' Johnston Center for Integrative Studies in Sociology. Even though you might catch her hosting the Stagecoach Festival's Honky Tonk or DJing at a local club, she's a wedding junkie through and through.

feel of no longer being the most cutting edge, but it's half the price of its visually-stunning competitors (I pay \$40/month). Bottom line—it does everything a DJ needs it to despite not being as sexy as other programs (despite that clients can not return to partially-completed forms with their old answers saved).

All of these newer, more modern programs felt like using a social media site, not like revisiting the world of MS-DOS, which is how I felt using my old DJ program. They include solutions for file sharing, which is simply a must today, and leaving comments that the whole team can see, for example. I can get digital signatures on my contracts within the programs, allowing me to cancel my Adobe EchoSign account (\$100/year). The new generation of programs integrate card processing services with invoicing, a web contact form with your contacts/leads, and invoices can automatically send payment reminders.

On the CRM side of things, I tried many options like Zoho, InfusionSoft, and Base. I used Zoho's CRM, email, and accounting programs which all worked together fairly seamlessly at a reasonable price. I realized once I found Planning Pod that I did not need the CRM or accounting services any more, so I moved on. Zoho does offer a project management program, but I never tried it due to the prohibitive cost. Overall, I would recommend Zoho products for their affordability, ease of use, and effectiveness.

Interestingly enough, I was attending a Book More Brides webinar recently on "Secrets of a High-End Wedding Pro," and the speaker, Justin Jacques of IndieWeddingDJ.com, attributed a huge amount of his success to InfusionSoft. InfusionSoft is a very powerful CRM program, but I was overwhelmed by it and ultimately moved on because it was too complicated for me. In just two years, he saw his budding wedding DJ income grow to \$100,000/year...so it's definitely worth giving InfusionSoft a look (Justin is now an InfusionSoft consultant!) You can get a free one-hour strategy session with him by visiting JustinJacques.com.

Notable mentions: You might also consider project management programs like Basecamp and Capterra.

There are clearly plenty of options for you to try, if your current DJ management system is not doing what you need it to do. Don't be afraid to consider them. **MB**

Tips On Switching DJ Management Programs

If you are doing at least a few events a month, wait until the off-season to switch. It is a lot of work to move all your files, clients, numbers, etc.

Keep your next month or two of clients on your old system rather than switching them right before their events. This means you will have to pay for two systems for a few months as you transition.

Honey Book will load your contract, contacts, pricing and package information for you for free. Ava Method will get you set up for a fee.

All of the solutions mentioned offer free trials (usually 30 days). I highly encourage you to actually go through all the steps of one of your events rather than just kicking the tires during your free trial.

Websites

www.projectpanorama.com

www.mydjplanner.co.uk

<http://theavamethod.com>

www.aisleplanner.com

www.honeybook.com

www.planningpod.com

www.zoho.com/crm

www.infusionsoft.com

<https://getbase.com>

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Career Segues

MIKE SHARES HIS PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

By Mike Ficher

The following is an outline of how my own entertainment career has transitioned repeatedly. Sometimes it has circled back to previous settings under new circumstances, but it always seems to keep moving forward, in often pleasantly surprising ways—just like a good dance mix. I present the following simply to show how being open to the possibilities can make for an interesting and rewarding ride...

HOW HARD CAN IT BE?

In 2004, I talked my way into becoming the public address announcer for the local summer collegiate wood bat baseball

However, next season, the team's owner, leveraging my background as a writer and a sports stat nerd, asked me to slide over into the official scorekeeper's role and game recap media slot to make room for a very talented but raw young announcer.

Instead of being closed and irritated, I willingly shared with Jared Lewis what I knew and became a mentor for him during the season while tending to my new role. Life as an entertainer, particularly in a small town, teaches that burning bridges is not the best business practice and ego not always your ready ally.

Jared was just what the games needed. Creative, energetic, a master entertainer, he quickly became a key presence at the game, the self-proclaimed Titan of Talk. Even, when the games were a bit ragged, Jared kept the fans involved with a special knack for pulling out the right bit at the right time, the ideal



team in our new home of Bend, Oregon.

Experience as a public address announcer? Minimal, a few Little League tournaments in the Bay Area. Well, I reasoned, I've been a mobile entertainer for nearly 20 years, spinning tunes, teaching dance and, more critically, serving as the voice and master of ceremonies for hundreds of events--those skills should translate well.

Sports? Well, I played on an adult league baseball team in the Bay Area and helped pay my way through college years before by covering a multitude of prep, college and professional sports including baseball. As a youngster, I calculated WHIP before baseball nerds thought of its value.

Public address announcing? I can do this!

CHRIS KOOOON-DAH!

The 2004 season was an immeasurable learning experience--each game an opportunity to grow in the craft while trying to offer engaging entertainment for team's fans.

person for the job that often felt like being the ringmaster at the circus.

THE SUMMER OF '42

At the end of the 2005 season, time came for me to move on. While Jared and I got along great and became lifelong friends, other summer opportunities beckoned. I stepped away from the press box.

In 2008, discussion turned, surprisingly, to the local community radio station serving as the on-air voice of the Elks. Only one other community radio station in the country, (in Everett, Washington), had ever been the voice of a for-profit summer baseball team. New ground was being broken.

ON THE AIR

After research (including contact and conversation with the folks who did the AquaSox games in Everett) and negotiations, a three-year deal was struck between KPOV and the Bend Elks. Since I hosted The Ultimate Oldies Show at KPOV and was the



A business analyst by day, Mike Ficher is an actor, voice artist, MC, sportscaster, public address announcer and former mobile entertainer. He is also the host of the weekly syndicated radio program, The Ultimate Oldies Show. Mike synthesizes these varied experiences to illuminate historic connectivity and fresh perspectives on the mobile entertainment profession. More info at www.mikeficher.com.

voice of Crook County High School sports on a local commercial station, I was deemed the logical choice to anchor the broadcast team.

Working with two other station volunteers, we staffed Elks' game for three years, broadcasting more than 90 games, supplementing the game coverage with pre-game, in-game and post-game interviews with players, coaches, community members and more.

While pleased with our broadcasts, after three years, the Elks and KPOV mutually agreed to part ways.

RUNNING OF THE BULLS

Another hiatus ended in 2013 when I was asked by the owner to fill in for Jared while he enjoyed a two-week vacation walking through Europe. During the interim nine years, I did public address announcing for a Little League state tournament, for a local women's professional soccer team, and for several sports for a local high school. I became more knowledgeable, comfortable and skilled in my craft.

Last year, I returned to the Elks' as part of the two-person broadcast team, streaming games at the team's website and on radio in the stadium. Another season, another remix.

NEW KID IN TOWN

After fifteen years, ownership changed hands in the off-season. And, Jared fulfilled the promise of his Elks' experience, becoming, after winning a nationwide search, an announcer with the

Harlem Globetrotters, traveling the world with one of the most recognized and beloved brands.

Might be another hiatus for me and the Elks?

BUZZ IN THE POCKET

Graduation night, Saturday evening, the arena at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds, Pomp and Circumstance hits the first notes. My phone rings. I do not recognize the number and, given that our son is about to graduate from high school, well, I am not about to answer the phone.

After an emotional two hour ceremony and post-event gathering, I listen to the message. The new general manager of the Elks wants to know if I can serve as public address announcer for tomorrow's game at 1:05 pm. Unfortunately, the team's new choice for public address announcer did not work out for the first two home games.

In my mind, well, this is a one-game trial.

But, unlike 2004, I was better prepared, more experienced and knew the Elks' brand inside and out. Rather than try to become Jared, I would be the best Mike I can be.

So far, that appears to serve the team well--I finished out the season. Next season? Well, given the nature of the business and my rollercoaster ride with Elks, we shall see.

Remix your business? Yes, those non-concentric circles of life teach valuable lessons and keep 'em smilin'! **MB**



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Getting My Act Together

RECOVERING FROM MISTEPS AND REACHING TOWARD THE GOAL

By Stu Chisholm

Since my last installment (*MB*, May 2015), still high on the infusion of inspiration from MBLV and the Canadian DJ Show, I still really didn't have an act. I mean, yes, I could still do what I've always done, but not nearly as well.

The old Cortex simply isn't cutting it anymore—buttons failing like a bad TV remote—and even though I could find an inexpensive 5th unit (having blown-out four of them since they came on the market), that would be the equivalent of treading water rather than leaping ahead. Stand-alone media controllers are passé; the industry has spoken, and computer-based DJ systems are the standard, like it or not. So, before thinking about how I was going to improve what I do during a show, it was time to figure out the nuts-and-bolts of my new system.

EXPENSIVE BAUBLE

To be on the cutting edge is to be in a very precarious and temporary condition. Yeah, it may sound cool, but in actuality you're going to be blazing a trail, and that means going where none have gone before. The obvious risk is that you're going to be the one to make all the mistakes that you could otherwise avoid by hanging back and watching how others do things. That hadn't occurred to me when I set out to create a fully 21st-century DJ rig. I envisioned using a tablet rather than a laptop, due to some inspiration from a colleague who showed me his iPad rig. But there were problems, too. For one, I do many outdoor shows each year, from car cruises to company picnics, and being able to read the screen in daylight is a major failing of the iPad and its clones. Also, the rigors of life on the road can quickly smash up a wimpy tablet like a cheap mirror. What to do?

My first impulse was to borrow from my secondary field; the world of first responders, security and law enforcement. (I have a sideline of teaching firearms safety courses.) So I found a few daylight-readable "ruggedized" tablets that I thought would do the trick. These things were built for harsh environments, such as a construction jobsite, or the inside of a police cruiser. I sent the specs to none other than the legendary tech guru, Ben Stowe, who looked them over and gave me the green light. Some \$4,000 later, I had two of them; a primary and one as a backup.

THE DARK SIDE OF TRAIL BLAZING

The other thought was that wireless control might be the futuristic, high-tech way to go, and Ben suggested the mixer/controller made by Pioneer called the XDJ-Aero. And it certainly did look cool when it arrived! Feature-packed, it seems purpose-built for audience interaction; guests can bring flash drives, iPods or cell phones and share a tune or mix with the DJ! Both are great concepts, right?

Join Stu online, at MobileBeat.com as he chronicles his complete company re-vamp in his blog, "From the Ground Up."



It turns out...not so much. First, the tablet would NOT run Virtual DJ or Serato. It simply balked; it doesn't have the screen resolution or power. The Pioneer piece refused to "talk" to it, regardless of how enabled Bluetooth or Wi-Fi were. DJ Scary Guy, my friend from the Toronto trip, is also a tech whiz. He managed to get some music playing by working on it for a very long time, but the problem was that whatever he did was extremely complex and beyond my ability. He wasn't sure if his settings would be stable or load automatically each and every time. And, should something not be right when I got to a gig, I had no chance of duplicating his efforts. Both he and Ben recommended I send the Aero back. They and several others I spoke to also suggested that I ditch the DAP tablet as well. Having sunk that kind of cash into them, I was reluctant, however the cold, hard facts were that they wouldn't work and I couldn't send them back. Time to suck it up...

RIG RE-BUILD, TAKE TWO

I think that Ben was as just as embarrassed as I was by the whole thing, so he agreed to take back the Pioneer and exchange it for me, which he facilitated as smooth as silk. I decided to focus on the mixer/controller first, and use the specs required by it and the software to determine exactly what computer I'd end up using. And once again, inspiration came via MBLV.

The folks at Numark decided to use MBLV19 to push a brand new controller they simply call the NV. (As in "envy.") A wickedly cool looking piece, it's very thin, very lightweight, and boasts two screens on the mixing decks, allowing a DJ to focus more on the mix and less on the laptop. They had a person walking around with a battery-powered demo, so I came home already impressed. Looking online, I became even more excited, seeing its capabilities, and also noting how much more user-friendly it is, especially to us old school geezers who dislike sub-menus and unnecessary complexity. It is less a tech geek's toy and more an entertainer's tool! Next it was time to go computer hunting...

Talking to DJs on the online forums, my first impulse was to rush out and grab a MacBook. They're ubiquitous. They're everywhere. DJ after DJ runs a MacBook. And that's precisely what I wanted to avoid: sameness. Besides, the particular laptop best suited to me was going to run a bit more than \$3,000. Before plunking-down the money, I decided to look around first. I was glad I did.

The specs listed at the Serato website eliminated a few candidates due to incompatibilities with various video cards, screen resolution limits (which was a main problem with my prior tablet), and HD speeds. Finally, after a lot of comparison shopping, I found the perfect companion for the NV: the Hewlett-Packard Omen.

The Omen is made from CNC-machined billet aluminum, making it very thin and lightweight, yet fairly rugged when closed up. It's wicked fast, with a solid-state HD, has a huge 15.6" high-rez screen and a crazy amount of USB ports. See, it turns out

that the Omen is actually a gaming computer, which ironically makes it ideal for running DJ software without any glitching. When paired-up with the NV, it also bears a remarkable physical resemblance, making the whole rig just plain look bad-ass! And, to my delight, when Serato was installed, my external music library HD attached and the NV turned on, everything worked perfectly right out of the box. No drama, no hiccups, no excuses. And the Omen was exactly half the cost of the Mac, allowing me to afford another one as a back-up.

LEMONS FROM LEMONADE

So what about those amazing tablets, you may ask? 'You're not just going to throw them away, are you?' Absolutely not! The first one will still find its way into my DJ console, and its job will be to run my DMX lighting control. Although I'm using the Chauvet GigBar IRCs, a wireless DMX controller will allow me to take better control of them, not to mention being able to add other lighting effects as I expand. The tablet is more than up to the job, and can do it in a package far smaller and lighter than stand-alone DMX controllers.

The second tablet got re-purposed, "sold" to my firearms training division. By attaching a webcam and loading it with a program called "L.A.S.R.," I can use SIRT training pistols for my safety course. SIRT (Shot Indicating Resetting Trigger) pistols have the weight and feel of a real firearm, yet shoot only laser beams! The L.A.S.R. (Laser Activated Shot Reporter) software, then, starts the timer, shows where the hits are on the target, keeps score and even calls "reload" when the simulated magazine is empty. Already having the expensive tablet made implementing this easy, and now my class can offer one more element of training that others cannot. Bonus!

LEARNING CURVE AND THE CASE FOR A CASE

Having never run Serato before on top of having a brand new Windows 8 computer, the learning curve was about as massive as Kardashian booty! My first "premier" gig was roaring up in just a few days, and in a forced homage to my bedroom DJ days, I spent them tinkering, fiddling and practicing with my new rig in my home studio on a makeshift table. When the big day finally arrived, I hedged my bet by plugging the Omen/NV/Serato system into my old Cortex/Rane cube. I ended up mostly ignoring the latter.

Even with the occasional blip caused by my own unfamiliarity with the software—accidentally hitting 'reverse play' and not knowing it would go backward even from cue was a good one—the evening was an overall success. I feel like I'm ready for prime time, but there is still one obstacle to overcome: a DJ rig needs to be ready to go. Mine isn't.

One of the drawbacks of small, lightweight electronics is that they took the transformers out of the case of the device, giving us that horrible little gremlin known as the "wall wart." Wall warts are bulky. They generate heat. They're fat, often blocking the surrounding outlets. And, collectively, they're heavy. Because of the sensitive nature of digital electronics, I run a small UPS

(Uninterruptable Power Supply) as well. All of this, and the tiny hard drives my music lives on, don't need to be seen. They just need to be plugged in, the system pre-assembled. The best way to do that is a case.

My thinking here is that I hate everything I've seen available online and at my local DJ toy store. With the NV's screens, I dislike the road cases that place the laptop away from the DJ, partially covering the upper part of the controller. Plus, they all look like they should either be touring with Metallica or like they were just air-dropped by the U.S. military. That might appeal to us DJ dudes, but what does a bride think? A couple might spend thousands, or even tens of thousands, decorating their hall. Do they really want to see stuff that looks like concert touring gear? And as a DJ, do you really want to be oofing around an expensive, bulky and fragile façade?

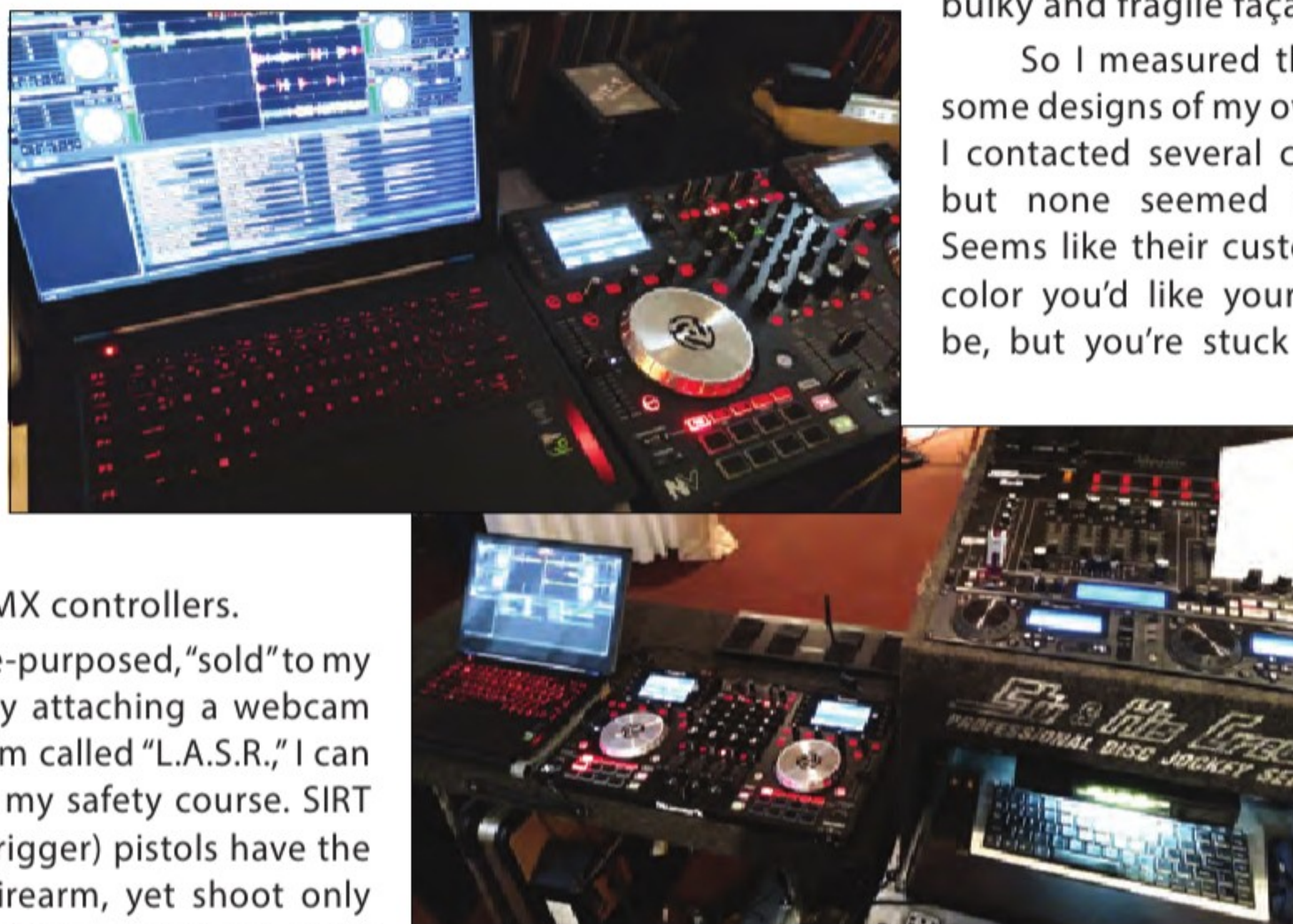
So I measured the gear, sat down and drew some designs of my own. Not sure how to proceed, I contacted several custom case builders online, but none seemed interested in my designs. Seems like their customization is limited to what color you'd like your laminate and hardware to be, but you're stuck with their basic configura-

tions. I contacted an old friend, Bob Minchella at Advanced Lighting & Sound in Troy, Michigan, where I once worked, and he suggested that I try a furniture builder, as they've had some good luck with them. After contacting a few local builders, I was again dismayed, as they seemed stuck in their own head-

space; they didn't get the idea that I need a light, rugged, yet good looking piece that is both a road case, table top and accent piece. What I need is someone from both worlds. What I needed was...

My friend, Jeff Rounds, was an extremely successful DJ for many years, not to mention the head of the Michigan Disc Jockey Network. A former engineer, he liked the technical end of the business. With crazy carpentry skills, he'd also done work for me before, building a custom road case and re-finishing some banged-up crank stands. He eventually retired from DJ work to move into home building and remodeling. Every now and then he'll forward photos of a job he's particularly pleased with. When it comes to carpentry, suffice it to say that the man has mad skills. And I was kicking myself that I hadn't thought of him before! So as I finish this installment, Jeff has agreed to come by, measure up my components and whip me up something worthy of gracing a formal event while providing decent protection of my gear. I'm extremely excited and optimistic about what he may come up with. (Check out my blog at Mobilebeat.com for photos of the end result.) Who knows? If the demand is there, maybe it could even become an actual product you'll see offered on the pages of Mobile Beat!

As always, I'd like to hear from you! In what ways have you upgraded your business? Tell me about it! Send along any stories, advice, comments or constructive criticisms to DJStuCrew@gmail.com with the subject, "DJ makeover" and maybe I'll pass them along. In the meantime, thank you for joining me on my journey thus far. Until next time, safe spinnin'! **MB**



Grow Your Karaoke Offerings, Legally

HELP: A NEW SUBSCRIPTION-BASED MODEL FOR KARAOKE

By Charlie Xavier

One of the most exciting recent developments in the music industry is the trend toward subscription-based “all-you-can-eat” music streaming services. Spotify, Pandora, Last.fm, and numerous other services have stepped in to fill the gap between pay-per-download services like iTunes and the file-sharing services that cost the music industry so much in lost royalties and public prestige.

The value proposition to the consumer is simple: Pay a monthly fee and get on-demand access to millions of songs in every possible genre. Or you can get free or reduced-price access to the same catalog if you are willing to listen to occasional ads.

These services offer value to the artists, composers, and music publishers, too. A portion of the monthly fee goes to compensate the people who are responsible for the creation of that music in the first place.

There’s really no reason why the subscription model can’t work for karaoke, too. Earlier this year, Phoenix Entertainment Partners, which owns the SOUND CHOICE® brand, debuted what it calls the “Hassle-free Easy Licensing Program,” or “HELP.” Subscribers get a license from Phoenix that gives them access to more than 16,500 SOUND CHOICE® karaoke tracks. Unlike past programs involving the SOUND CHOICE label, a HELP licensee doesn’t have to show proof of ownership of discs. As long as the track carries the familiar “red logo,” it’s covered by this program.

One difference between HELP and the streaming services is that Phoenix doesn’t provide you with the tracks themselves.



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But for most KJs, sourcing the tracks hasn't been a problem. And just like the streaming services, a portion of HELP licensing fees go to compensate the upstream rights holders—the music publishers who participate in the program. Phoenix has already signed two major publishing groups and expects to add more in the near future.

"The HELP program is a great way for new KJs to begin to use our products legally," Kurt Slep, president of Phoenix, said. "Unlike traditional media such as CD+Gs, HELP doesn't require a large upfront investment to get access to a premium collection."

The HELP Operator License, which is intended for mobile karaoke operators, costs \$199 per system per month, but a six-month term agreement cuts that price to \$129 per month, and prepaid licenses can drive the price as low as \$99 per month. Phoenix also offers online ordering, so a new licensee can be up and running almost immediately.

HELP can be useful for existing KJs who want to expand their operations—either in terms of the number of tracks or by adding more rigs—without trying to source additional discs.

"Adding a HELP license to your operation can move you

With HELP, the KJ can begin two-rig operation almost immediately, the rights holders get compensated, and everybody's happy.

from one rig to two in the space of about a day," Slep said. "Before HELP, to stay legal, you'd need to source original discs, some of which have been out of print for 10 years or more."

For that reason, KJs who wanted to add a second rig were faced with

a dilemma: Do without certain popular songs until another original SOUND CHOICE disc can be found, or run the risk of illegal operation. With HELP, however, the KJ can begin two-rig operation almost immediately, the rights holders get compensated, and everybody's happy.

Getting a HELP license is also a path to getting new SOUND CHOICE tracks when the company returns to production later this year. "We've already begun taking reservations for Sound Choice ADVANCE, our new production program," Slep said. "In order to get access to the new music, you'll need to be a Certified KJ, a GEM series licensee, a verified original disc user—or a HELP licensee."

For those who prefer to stick with hard media, Phoenix still has a limited number of GEM series sets available to license, and the certified KJ program—which gives KJs permission to media-shift the content on their original SOUND CHOICE discs—was recently extended indefinitely. **MB**



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Silent Celebrations

THE HEADPHONE PARTY: A WAY TO ROCK THE HOUSE—WITHOUT A SOUND

By Jared Kingsley

A good friend of mine came home from a large convention last year and told me about the Silent Disco concept. I immediately loved it and decided that I could produce it as well.

Nowadays, Silent Discos are popular and widespread. At these parties, each participant is given a set of headphones; on the set of headphones is a volume button and another button to switch the station. Guests put their headphones on and can listen to two or three different stations. The channels could simply be two iPods playing different music simultaneously, it could be two live DJs, or even a band and a DJ. Most equipment used at these parties also has a light on the side of the headset that corresponds with a channel. That makes it so you can know what everyone else is listening to.

Gear: There are just a couple of components: wireless headphones and transmitters, which both come with rechargeable batteries inside. The transmitters that I have use female RCA inputs, and then you can connect to whatever music device you'd like, whether it's an iPod, computer or microphone.

There are two options for the equipment. First, you can rent it—which is what I did before I purchased because I was not sure if I wanted to invest in the gear due to the initial cost. So, this way, you sell the gig, then the rental company ships the gear to your door, you use it, and you ship it right back the next day. There are also price discount options for larger rentals as well as extended rentals. By renting, you can try it out without worrying about being constantly booked, and as long as you don't lose or damage the gear it's a pretty simple transaction. The only downside is that this route is expensive relative to the price you can charge for the service. Renting the equipment is a good way to essentially train yourself when starting out, but wouldn't be the most profitable way in the long term.



The other option is purchasing the equipment outright. I had a few events lined up and decided to buy the gear for \$5,000. I bought 125 headsets and three wireless transmitters. The headsets come with charging docks, and I bought the extra transmitter as a backup, just in case. The headphones and transmitters last approximately six hours on a full charge. In case I need to do a larger event than I have headphones for, the company I rented from also sold me the equipment, so we use the same gear which means I can rent supplemental sets from them.

These Silent Discos have been a great source of income this year for me. I signed a corporate client that gave me a series of events throughout their national festivals that happen all year. They have me come to their festival and I set up a 20' x 20' tent. They provide the service at no cost to the festival attendees; they can just stop by and participate freely. These events have alcohol and participation gets progressively larger as the event goes on.

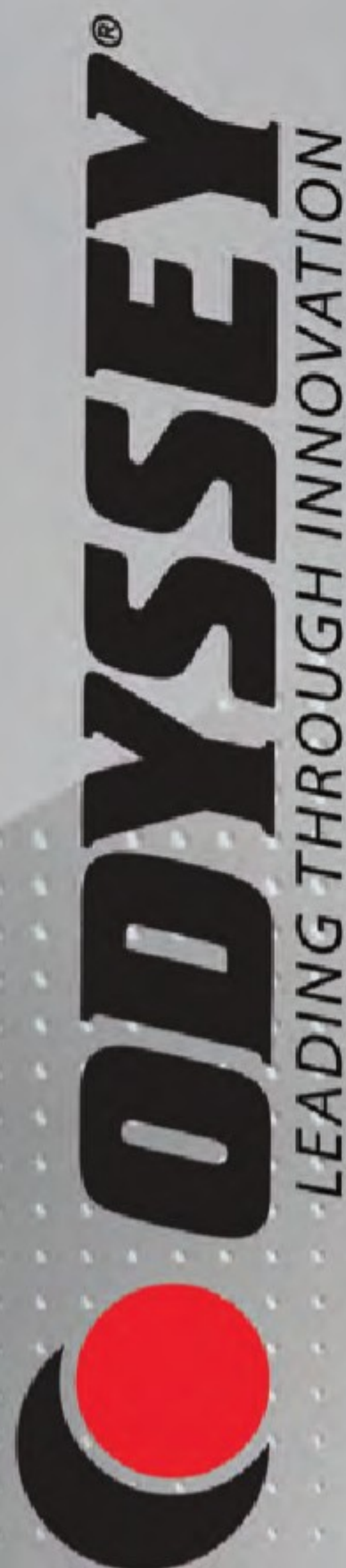
But, aside from what I've mentioned so far, the applications for the equipment are vast: you can do mobile pub crawls, city tours, bilingual event translation, dance parties where there is a noise ordinance, college orientations, flash mobs, summer camps, birthday parties, bar and bat mitzvahs and anything else

you can come up with!

For every person participating, there are a handful of people watching. It's really something to see. Not only is it kind of odd in and of itself, but my colleagues and I have declared "headphone courage" a thing: The second you put the headset on a person, all inhibitions are lost and they just immediately start dancing!

It's a phenomenon.

We do these parties across the entire US. If you would like more information or if you would like to hire us for an event, email me at jared@jentevents.com. I have a discount available on equipment rentals and purchases, if you mention this article. **MB**



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Mail, Remixed

THE POWER OF OLD SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

By Joe Bunn

Usually July and August are slower months (at least down south here in NC where it's 100 degrees daily). Of course things ramp back up in the fall for wedding season, but it's nice to use slower times to assess your current marketing plan. As I was doing a few marketing-related things the other day in the office, I noticed how "old school is still cool."

In other words, there are things that my dad's company probably used back in the day to gain customers that you can flip and use in the year 2015. Sometimes you have to think like the ad guys from "Mad Men" but without the skinny ties and tie bars (actually, disregard that, I wear both). Think like those guys, but with a modern twist.

For a long time I took "snail mail" out of my marketing repertoire. It seemed dated and silly in the world of email...that is until email overload became a real thing. I remember in my younger days having my first AOL account. Logging onto that big desktop computer and hearing "You've Got Mail!" when you fired it up got me stoked! What was it? Who is emailing me? Now I see that little number of unopened emails sitting on the icon in the dock of my Mac and think "Holy smokes, how am I gonna get through all of those?" Guess what? Everyone feels like that these days and it's actually rare and unusual to get a piece of mail in the mailbox. Do

yourself a favor right this minute. Go to Sendoutcards.com and set yourself up an "customer" account. (If you want to be a "distributor," it can be a multi-level marketing opportunity; I didn't opt for that part of it, but it's up to you.) In any case, this is where I send all of my cards from.

Can you remember the last time you got an actual birthday card in the mail from someone? I can't! All I get is 1,000 people on Facebook saying "HBD dude!" Really? You can't even type out "Happy Birthday" to me? Good grief, talk about lazy.

PERSONAL TOUCH VIA ONLINE TECHNOLOGY

I won't lie, this is going to take some time and effort on your part, but start collecting birth dates, not only from your friends and families, but from everyone that you care about in the industry: wedding planners, photographers, cake makers, dress shops, any and everyone that could possibly be a referral source for your DJ company. It's actually really easy. Email addresses are usually on their site or on the stack of business cards you collect from all of the vendors you work with (you do collect those at every gig right?). Simply create a mass email using Mailchimp (if you want it to look sexy), or a simple note right from your regular email will also work. Basically, it goes something like this:

Dear Xxxx,

I'm updating my contact list and would love to have your birth date. Don't worry, I'm not going to ask for the year, although you are welcome to share that as well. Thank you, and I can't wait to see you on the dance floor!

Sincerely,

Xxxx

See how easy that is? You'll be shocked at how many people respond or send back funny things like "I expect a gift!" Little do they know, they will be getting one (or at the very least, an awesome card).

Now, the beauty of Sendoutcards is that you can actually



Joe Bunn started his DJ career at age 14, when his mom drove him to gigs in her wood-paneled Jeep Wagoneer. His company now does about 400 weddings a year and another 200+ private, corporate and charity events. He has been on the board of both ISES and NACE, founded the Triangle DJ Association, and has also won numerous industry awards. Recently, he has been helping other DJs grow their businesses as a consultant. He has also presented at major industry events, including MBLV. For more info go to www.bunndjcompany.com.

create custom cards and templates that you save and come back to each time you want to send out a birthday card. You can write them all at the beginning of the month (like I do) and schedule when they go out so the person gets it on or right around their actual birthday. They take about seven days to get printed and mailed, so keep that in mind. So what's on mine? On the front cover, we have a picture of all of my DJs (looking very *Reservoir Dogs* cool I might add) and it says "Happy Birthday from Bunn DJ Company." The inside is basic, all white, and says "Dance Like No One is Watching!" On the bottom of the fold, I just add a simple note along the lines of

Dear Xxxx,

It was so great working with you at the Xxxx/Xxxx wedding last month. I hope to see more of you! Also, all of us hope that you have a great birthday! See you soon!

Sincerely,

Xxxx and the Team

Once you start doing this, you will be shocked at how many people will text, call or event post to instagram about how classy and old school cool you are!

One more way that we use Sendoutcards and "snail mail" is to gain more amazing Wedding Wire reviews. "But Joe, how do you do that?" you ask. Simple! At every wedding, I'm sure you take a bunch of pictures right? The first dance, the unique cake, maybe some interesting décor, etc. (Without getting in the pho-

tographer's way, of course.) A few days after the wedding, log in to your Sendoutcards.com account and create a custom card with the cover being one of those awesome photos. On the inside write something like

Dear Xxxx & Xxxx,

What an amazing reception! I hope that you guys had as much fun as I did! If you don't mind, please take a moment to visit www.eventwire.com/review/BunnDJCompany and let everyone know that you had a great time. Here's to many years together!

Cheers,

Xxxx

Now, how awesome is it going to be when that couple rolls in from their honeymoon and opens a card that literally has a picture of them doing their first dance on the cover? Do you think anyone else involved in the wedding is going to do that? Nope! Game over, you win!

I hope that you'll do a little "remix" on snail mail and bring it back into your marketing plan. (Maybe we can even save the USPS...) You may be surprised at how a little "old school" communication can freshen up your relationship-building and help bring in more and better referrals. **MB**

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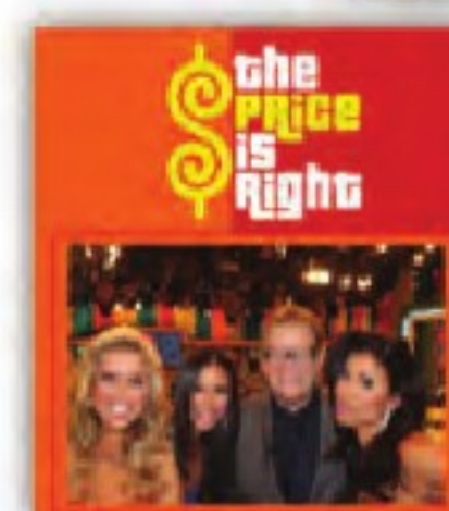
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Making the (Audio) Connection

UNDERSTANDING THE HARDWARE THAT TIES YOUR GEAR TOGETHER

By Scott Jarema

The modern mobile DJ, in addition to being a performer and MC, may also play the role of roadie and even audio engineer. Even with the myriad of gear options available today, we still have to connect it all together.

There's a wide variety of plugs and connectors that do that job for us and each one has its place. Here we are going to look at the most common plugs encountered by DJs and how they are used.



1/4" OR PHONE PLUGS AND 1/8" PLUGS

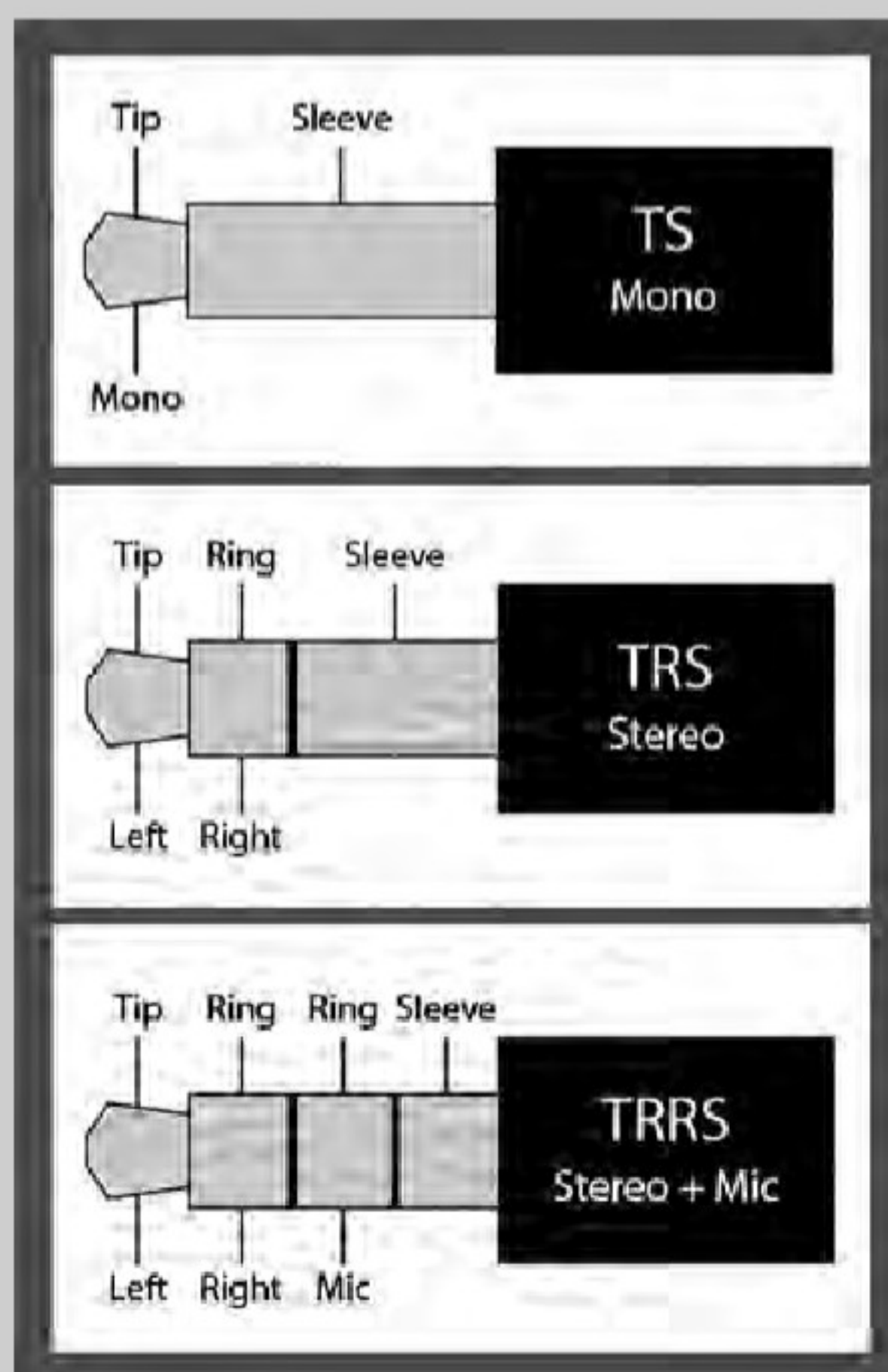
The name of the phone plug (short for "telephone plug") hints at its origins. These plugs were originally used on telephone switchboards. These are probably the most common plugs you will encounter as a DJ. They are 1/4" in diameter (and often simply referred to as 1/4" connectors) and are used for speaker, headphone and microphone connections.

There is also the familiar "mini" phone plug which is 1/8" and commonly associated with personal stereo players with headphones. Many DJ headphones now come with the mini 1/8" plug

installed and include an adapter for the 1/4" sockets found on mixers.

They are usually wired for stereo (headphones) or mono, (speaker, microphones). You often hear them referred to by their different types as "TRS" for stereo or "TS" for mono. TRS stands for "Tip Ring Sleeve" (stereo), and TS for "Tip-Sleeve" (mono). If you look closely at a TRS plug, you can see the tip, the ring and the sleeve separated by insulators. On the TS plug you see the tip and sleeve separated by an insulator. They can have more variations, but we normally do not encounter those in our setups. The sleeve in the TRS is your common negative while the tip and ring are the "plus" right and left channels. On the TS you have your plus and minus only. One of the other variations we can encounter is a "TRRS" (Tip, Ring, Ring, Sleeve) mini plug which is commonly used on iPhone/iPad and other devices that included a provision for the microphone portion of the headsets when used to talk on the phone.

Don't worry though if you need to use a mobile device as a sound source. When the standard "TRS" plug is used with an iPhone/iPad it will output stereo to your mixer without needing an adapter.



XLR CONNECTORS

XLRs, sometimes referred to as "Cannon" plugs after one of its manufacturers, are balanced connectors commonly used for microphone and speaker audio connections. They can come with multiple pins but we normally encounter the basic 3-pin configuration. Because these plugs are used with shielded 2-conductor cable, they are preferred over the phone type plugs for audio connections. Essentially, the third pin is connected to the shield in the cable, and the chassis ground on the components. As such, they are less susceptible to electrical noise which can result in

an annoying hum in your audio. Many newer speakers have a combination XLR-1/4" phone sockets on the back inputs, which allows you to use either type in your setup. XLR plugs are also used in DMX lighting control setups as control cables run from a DMX controller to the lighting array. XLR connectors additionally have an advantage over phone connectors as they lock into the plug reducing the chance of being accidentally pulled out.



NEUTRIK SPEAKON™ CONNECTORS

SpeakON™ connectors are high-amperage, high-voltage connectors developed by Neutrik, which are used to connect speakers to an amplifier. Unlike the XLR or phone connectors, they were designed specifically for this purpose. They are a 1" diameter and usually have a blue trim ring on them. A vast majority of mobile DJs run powered speakers, (speakers with built-in amplifiers) so you probably won't encounter this type in your set up unless you are running unpowered speakers and an amplifier. If you do, you probably have these as one of your output options. Similar to the XLR, these connectors lock into place so the chance of them accidentally unplugging is minimized.



RCA OR PHONO PLUGS

RCA or "phono" plugs are commonly used with consumer grade audio and video components. As the name implies, they were originally made by RCA and are also used to connect turntables to an amplifier or receiver. We commonly see them as line level inputs for turntables, MP3 players and/or CD players—pretty much any line source you want to input to your mixer. For audio, they are colored red for the right stereo channel and white for left stereo or mono channel. You can also use them with adapters to feed line outs to powered speakers or an amplifier. I don't recommend running your setup this way, but in a pinch, it can save the gig.

One thing to be aware of is the center pin is your plus or "hot" lead and the ring is your shield. You can get a loud hum and

a pop if you connect these while your amp/speakers are powered up. Because of this, it is advised that you power off your sources and speakers/amplifiers before you disconnect or connect your components.

(As an aside, it is always a good to carry adapters that allow you to change the type of connector for your cables, just in case of emergencies. Under normal circumstances, however, you shouldn't rely on adapters in a professional sound setup. High-quality cables and connectors are your best insurance against failure when it comes to connection your gear.)



BANANA PLUGS

Banana plugs are commonly found on high-end home audio receivers and are still found on audio power amplifiers. They are designed to plug into the binding posts on the back of the amplifier and can even be stacked or ganged up so you can drive multiple sets of speakers from one output. An advantage to this is that if you lost one channel of your amp, you can gang up both left and right speakers on the working channel and you will still get sound from both of them. Some types of banana plugs have holes through them with set screws so you can insert bare wire and then tighten the set screws securing the wire in place. This makes it very easy to replace connectors in the field without too much hassle. Banana plugs are not gender specific so you could mistakenly plug the plus and minus in backwards if you are setting up in a dark area. They can also be easily snapped off if you aren't careful to protect the back of your amp from being knocked around. Because the leads can sometimes be exposed, there is also a risk of shorting out your amp if something metallic lies across the leads. Banana plugs would be fine for a set up that is more or less permanent. However, as long as you are careful, there's no reason you can't perform with them.

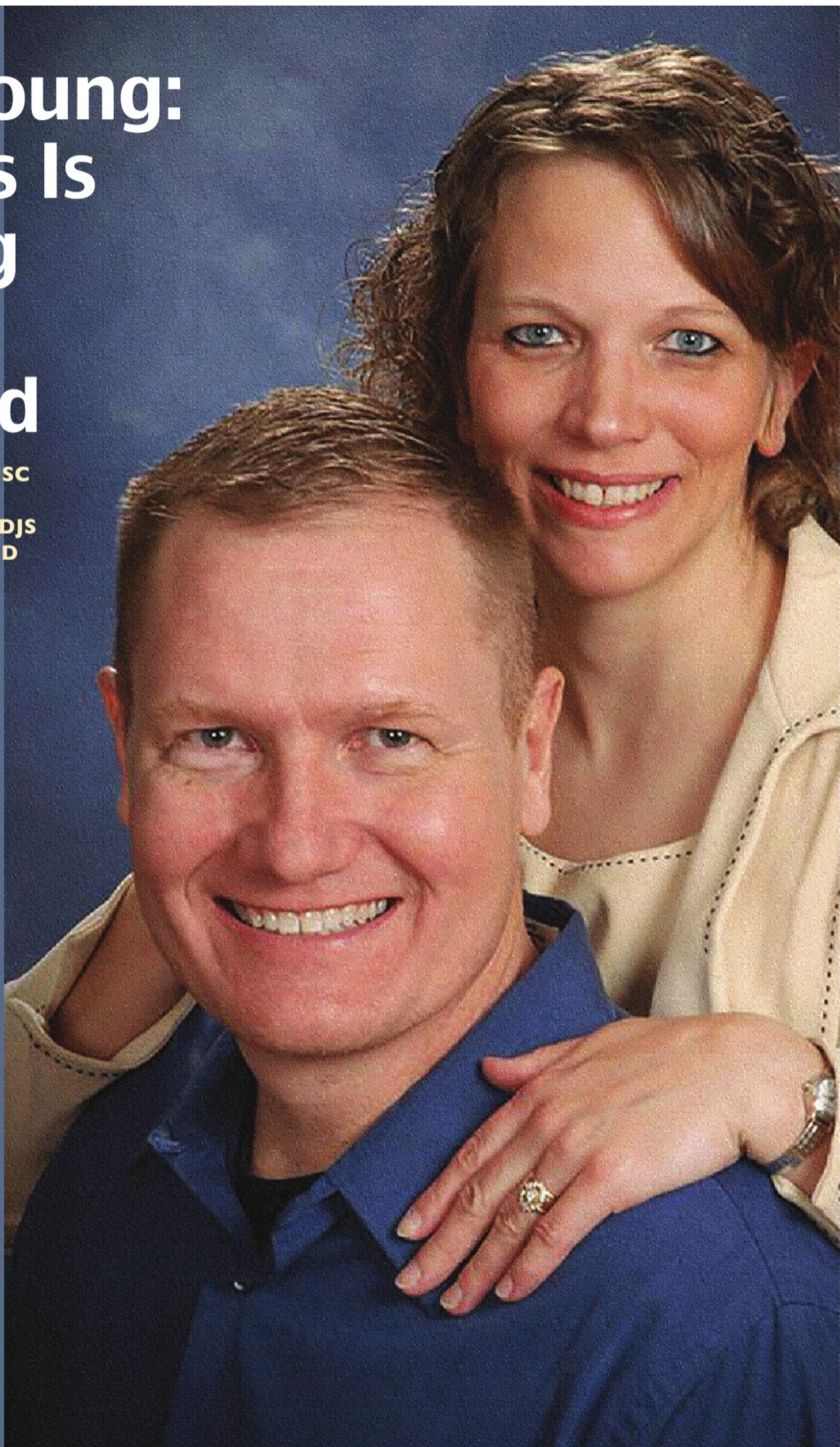
This list of connectors is by no means exhaustive, but it represents the most common types DJs usually come across when connecting their various pieces of gear. Having some understanding of what each one is intended to do and employing each type in the right situation will help you create the most reliable setup possible. **MB**



John Young: Success Is Helping Others Succeed

**THE PUBLISHER OF DISC
JOCKEY NEWS HAS A
PASSION FOR GIVING DJS
THE TOOLS THEY NEED**

By Ryan Burger



John Young of *Disc Jockey News* is a friend in the DJ world about whom I have never heard anyone say anything negative—and that's unusual in this industry that is much more fractured than it needs to be. John gets along with everyone and everyone likes to work with him. John started out DJing, doing local high school dances, the same year that I got into the DJ business (1986), about 6 hours away, up in the middle of Minnesota.

His connection with the national DJ industry started in the late 1990s when he attended the first few Mobile Beat Shows in Las Vegas and found other DJs to network with. He and a handful of friends started the Minnesota Association of Professional DJs, which has since morphed into the Midwest Association of Professional DJs.

While he was growing in the DJ industry, Lori, his wife was honing her skills as an editor and writer and eventually a publisher of local newspapers in the middle of Minnesota. She was working in different newspaper departments until around 2000, when she started a local paper for the group of small communities in which they live.

John picks up the story: "That experience with her working with the paper is really taking the combination of my love for the DJ industry, my desire to help educate and help DJs improve their businesses, and her newspaper background just became kind of a nice marriage of information and business things to be able to put the *Disc Jockey News* out there for the mass audiences.

"It started out as a publication that was going to be free in the DJ industry. We had our circulation that we were mailing out tens of thousands of papers when it first started out. And we were very well received within the DJ industry because it was going out to DJs at their favorite price: free.

"That lasted for a few years and eventually got to the point where it became to that we couldn't afford to continue to go as a free publication, so we switched over to a paid publication, with a subscription base in 2008. Circulation varies, but as we sit today, probably I would say 8 out of 10 people who are reading the publication are reading it online."

But in addition to this fantastic monthly newspaper that DJs can read online for free or subscribe to in a print form inexpensively, *Disc Jockey News* is known for its extensive

online DJ industry coverage.

John details their offerings: "We have, of course, through *Disc Jockey News* and all the different variations of that. And, again, a lot of the things on the websites are more online-based with a video and doing more things with that. So we have the different social media channels and Twitter and YouTube and different things, and then we also have *Disc Jockey News TV*, which is our weekly programming which is strictly video, and it's all about different things within the industry.

"We have some things that are the new news for the week, we have some advice things, we have some shows on talking social media, but it just really is kind of a nice fit for the way the industry is going today, that if information is two weeks old, in many worlds they view that as old news and it's not something they want to get into. So we went where DJs are wanting to go, which is online and helping them to get that information just as quickly as possible."

John is an absolute people person and has found some great people that do a lot of this for *Disc Jockey News*, which has also helped him maintain a good work life / family

much as possible and I do a few shows. I'll probably do in the course of a year between 10 and 20 shows and more of those tend to be larger youth rally events where we're doing a large Christian event somewhere and doing sound and some entertaining on the stage, and really not the traditional DJ as much as we used to do."

John is careful to point out that he is not a one-man-band when it comes to running his various endeavors. "I think that probably the most important thing that I want people to remember or to think about when they see things we do is that it's not just me that is doing these things. I'm kind of spearheading and I get the ideas, but it's really a team effort, and a team goes from Rob who's working with a lot of our sales things; Laurie does a lot of the office things; our writers, our content creators—I mean, there's just a whole team of people who really have come together and we've come together because of that passion for the industry and the passion for helping DJs to improve their business so that they can take the step to be more profitable and to have, truthfully, more family time.

"That's really the impetus of a lot of the



life balance, despite the constant pressure to keep the newspaper and website up to date, and his continuing efforts to stay in touch with the actual world of DJing.

"I do a few shows each year," says John, "but I'm much more selective about where I go and what I do, and it's mainly to protect my family time. And I know you can appreciate this, Ryan, that our time with our children is very limited and we need to basically really emphasize the time that we do have with them.

"So I really protect my weekends as

things we do...we want the DJs to be able to have the ability to take that family time and enjoy that time with their children and their significant others."

It is clearly John's mission to bring more people, especially DJs, to the success level in business and life that he enjoys. A true gift to the DJ world.

For more information on everything that John Young and his DJN crew are doing, head over to DiscJockeyNews.Com and DJNTV.Com. **MB**

Mitch Taylor, Multi-Op Master & Maestro of Sales

By Ryan Burger



Mitch (R) records a video as Jeffrey Gitomer (L) looks on.

If you have been around the national mobile DJ industry over the last 5+ years, Mitch Taylor's name should be one that you know. From his speaking at national conferences, including MBLV, writing for Disc Jockey News, to his spirited participation in the online DJ world, this is one DJ that you need to be paying attention to.

Mitch is based in Escanaba, Michigan, a very small town in the upper peninsula of Michigan, a region of the state where less than 100,000 people live. Growing up in Maine, he decided he wanted to do radio work, so he went to the New England School of Broadcasting. After being a radio broadcaster for several years, he ended up on a boat as a cruise ship DJ for Carnival Cruise Lines. At sea is where he got truly infected with the DJ bug.

"It was every week," Mitch recalls. "Out of Los Angeles, every Sunday was LA. Every Wednesday was Puerto Vallarta, and every Thursday was Mazatlan, Mexico, and every Friday was Cabo San Lucas, and back to LA on Sunday. It was about a 10-month stretch. And then I took a two-month vacation, a work break, if you will. And then hopped onboard the Carnival flagship, the Carnival Imagination."

Onboard ship, he met a guest and years later he married her after moving back up to Michigan. He spent some years in the lower peninsula near Detroit and then moved to Escanaba, where Taylor Entertainment, now Taylored Weddings was born.

Taylored Weddings is what Mitch calls a "boutique multi-op" company. He didn't want his company to be a "Walmart of DJs" sending out 15 rigs every weekend, but did want to have other people DJing under the Taylored name.

He explains: "So originally, it was just myself in 2002, when I opened Taylored Entertainment. But then in 2007, I took the company full-time. In 2008, the name changed to Taylored Weddings. And in 2010, Mike Walters said something that really stuck with me, that I could expand my business, and I could duplicate what I was offering.

"A boutique multi-op to me is a company that offers much more hands-on service to their couples, much

more personalization, because I didn't want Taylored Weddings to lose the branding that we had already established with myself, as a single op in the market place. So I just wanted to be able to duplicate those efforts. So we keep it small. We keep it personalized with our clients, so that our branding stays congruent throughout.

"And it wasn't a case of, well, if you get Mitch, you're doing great, but if you get somebody else, good luck. I never wanted that to be the case with our company. And so we've done different things to maintain that branding."

The importance that Mitch puts on each event fits with his company name, "Taylored"—he really tailors the event to the couple. As he describes it, "The two goals are:

1. I want the two of them, and their parents, to feel like guests at their own wedding reception.

2. And I want their guests to leave, saying 'Wow, that was so much fun. That wedding was so Brian and Katie,' or whatever the couple's names were.

"From that standpoint, it's whatever we can do to help achieve that goal. So we branched out into minister services. We branched out to ceremony sound and coordination. We provide planning for the couple, day of event coordination, lighting, photo booths. Those are pretty much our core services here."

Mitch mentioned a number of influences and inspirations within the DJ industry, including Mark Ferrell, Bill Hermann, Randy Bartlett and a comedian named Kyle C (check out this entire interview online to hear more). But his strongest influence in business has come from beyond the DJ realm, from world of sales, specifically Jeffrey Gitomer.

"He wrote the best-selling sales book of all time, the *Little Red Book of Selling*," says Mitch. "...I used to read Jeffrey before I even took my company full-time, back when I was working at a car dealership in town. And I was a finance manager there. I would just constantly immerse myself in sales, and always read Jeffrey's stuff, and very intrigued.

"And I had the opportunity, probably four years ago, five years ago, to become Gitomer Certified Ace of Sales, and I took that training, and succeeded with flying colors. First pass of the test. No problem. But I started marketing myself that way,



when I started speaking on the circuit, if you will. And then the opportunity arose, through Jeffrey, decided to offer his teaching, to have people become, if they wished, to become a Gitomer Certified Advisor.

"And this would allow you to be able to offer his trainings online, his whole coursework, and be able to help coach people in the sales process, with his trainings, with his teaching. And also, you had to fly to Charlotte, North Carolina, and take a three day boot camp on Jeffrey's coursework, to be able to learn it, instinctively, intuitively, and be able to offer it to people that are interested in sales and want to grow more in their sales skills.

"And you're also able to offer workshops based upon Jeffrey's best-selling book. So currently, we have four workshops available. And that is *Little Red Book of Selling*, *Little Black Book of Connections*, *Little Gold Book of Yes Attitude*, and also *Customer Satisfaction is Worthless, Customer Loyalty is Priceless*. Those are the four workshops we offer."

Mitch has taken his skills as a DJ, duplicated his personal quality to build his business, and also immersed himself in a whole world of knowledge beyond that. Mitch is also someone who can teach, and the DJ industry is better off for it.

Find out more about Mitch Taylor, and his podcast with Vickie Musni, called *Creating Connections*, at MitchTaylor.Net, and about his connection with Mobile Beat at MobileBeatLasVegas.Com. **MB**

A Voice Worth Listening To

JASON GRIFFITH SHARES HIS STORY AND TIPS FOR TACKLING VOICE-OVER WORK

By Mike Ryan

Who could ever guess that a voice message on an answering machine would lead to an acting career? That's exactly what happened to Jason Griffith of New York. "They heard my outgoing answering message, which was either a game show host or a Joe Pesci imitation, I can't remember which, but mine was the voice they wanted for a national radio spot."

Jason started acting professionally at age 17. His first paid job was with the traveling tour of *Goosebumps—Live on Stage* (based on the popular R. L. Stine children's horror novel series). By the age of 20 he was doing radio and television commercials for JetBlue, M&Ms, Burger King, and BMW. His talent agent noticed that Jason was very good at creating voices.

"They kept sending me on voice auditions and I kept booking them. From commercials I made a relatively easy transition into animation." Jason has done voices on almost 30 video games and was a regular on *Pokémon* the TV cartoon show for three years.

Arguably, his biggest claim to fame is as the voice of TV's *Sonic the Hedgehog* for seven years. Hedgehog fans still consider Jason to be the best voice of the show. (Jaleel White, who played Steve Urkel of the TV sitcom *Family Matters*, was Sonic's first voice.)

Jason was always interested in voice work and as a child would create his own radio shows, interviews, dramas and comedies. "My parents bought me microphones and voice recorders every year for Christmas. Now, when I'm in a studio, I feel connected with my younger self. It's a cool feeling knowing that I can make a living doing something that I've always considered play and fun."

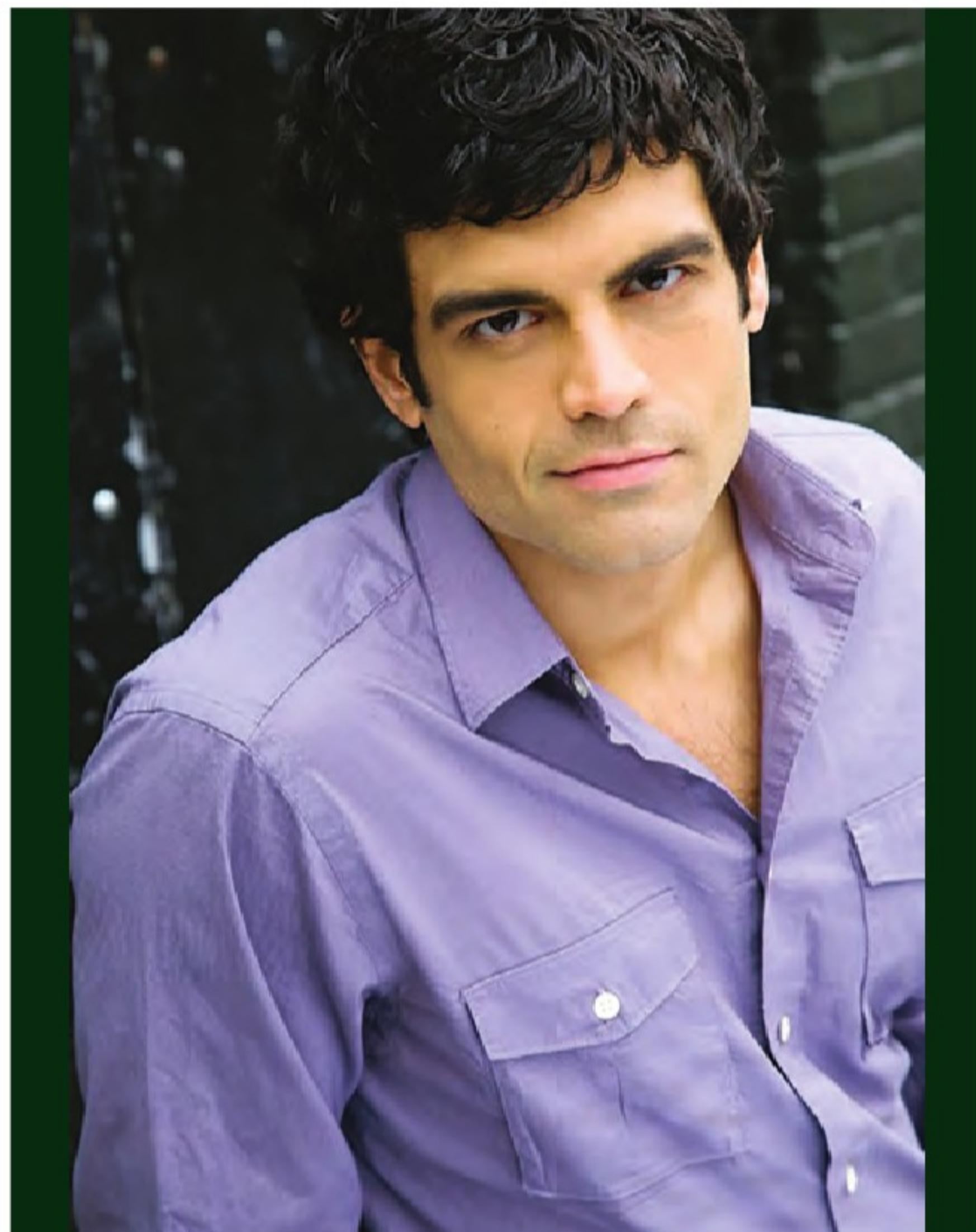
MORE THAN JUST TALKING

Many people think it's easy to be a DJ: Just buy some equipment and music and basically you're ready to go. Jason says it's the same with acting, but it's a lot harder than it looks (or sounds).

"My great acting coach, Anthony Abeson, says you have to have a strong appetite to keep learning and bettering yourself, to keep going when things get tough, to encourage yourself when you're feeling down," Jason says. He adds, "You have to fight the frame of mind that everyone else is working and you're not. The truth is that there's enough work for everyone, including you... forget about competition, embrace the fact that you're not going to book every job, just the ones that are right for you, and sometimes not even those!"

It's likely that many MB readers consider themselves to have voice-over talent. If that describes you, and wants to give it a try,

there are online sites like Backstage.com and Voicebunny.com, where you can pick out an ad and audition for it. I wondered if these sites just offered



false hope or are they the real deal? Jason has never used one himself but says "...people do get business from them but these sites have a down side, that there's bound to be a lot more people auditioning for each job then what a talent agent can line up for you."

When mobile DJs meet clients for the first time they are basically selling themselves. The same applies to actors when they audition for a part. In both situations, that first impression is critical. However, Jason emphasizes the importance of being yourself. "It may seem cliché, but simply being yourself can go a LONG, LONG way. When I first started out, I had a tendency to 'put on a voice' when the auditions really called for a natural tone. When I was told 'Don't push, just be yourself,' it was hard to understand at first. I thought isn't that what this work about; doing voices, selling products, being an announcer? No, it turned out it was about something more personal, something unique that the producers and clients were trying to get."

Radio veterans used to call DJs who "pushed" their voices "Ronnie Radio." Talent agents simply do not want that. According to Jason, "The number one direction given at auditions these days is to be natural, 'non-announcery,' like you're talking to a friend. Being yourself leads to fun interaction that is unique, creative, and interesting, the type of interaction that people inwardly



Mike Ryan started out writing for news radio, and has been a DJ in the SoCal radio market on KGB and KSDS. He mobiles as Mike on the Mike. He is also the inventor/owner of Frankenstand Powered Speaker Stands.



crave. They really don't want to be 'sold,' in fact, that turns people off. When I hear someone on the mic 'doing a DJ voice' when it's not necessary, a part of me stops connecting, stops listening."

Mobile DJs often need to be up and excited, but some of us equate excitement with increased volume. Jason's trick is his mental "phantom power."

"You can be talking about one thing on the mic, but be thinking of something completely different as your trigger for excitement and no one will ever know that you're not just completely and genuinely enthusiastic for what you're speaking about. If you can make yourself excited or enthusiastic for whatever reason, you'll come across that way. Sometimes this can increase our volume a bit, but if done correctly it can actually work to our advantage."

Preaching to the DJ choir, Jason says don't forget to read your audience: "[always] keep in mind who you are talking to. This is not just a superficial thing to do; it's a feeling and a goal. The more you can feel as if you're really talking to, say, your best friend, a girl you're trying to impress, or even a family member, the more the audience connect with you. Also, listening to your audience is tremendously important, gelling with them, so to speak, really communicating. That makes this process more organic and less 'show.'"

YOUR VOICE IS YOUR TOOL: PROTECT IT

I asked Jason what things he has learned to help his voice? "Exercise, building your lung capacity through cardiovascular exertion [he jogs] helps maintain your breath throughout long sessions and even longer copy. Movement is essential in creating a more dynamic range. Remember, your voice is not only an extension of your throat, but of your entire body and spirit."

Jason strongly believes what goes in your mouth effects what comes out. "I don't consume dairy as a rule, but, especially not before a session, as milk is mucous-forming. Beer also has the same effect, they both really mess with my vocal cords. While in the studio I drink room-temp water, never cold! Also, I'd recommend warming up your voice through your whole body and not just from the throat. Singing is a fantastic tool to loosen up, to open up, and to create vibrations in your whole body. Singing while moving (yoga, stretching, doing chores) especially helps."

TALKING TECH?

LG has introduced HomeChat, a new line of "talking" home appliances that respond to human and Smartphone commands. We already converse with Siri on our iPhones, and now with LG's HomeChat you can literally tell your appliance what to do, and your fridge, washing machine, or oven will obey you!

I wondered if this new technology was a threat or an opportunity for voice-over work. Jason's first response was that "it sounds spooky or incredibly sterile; on the other hand, it can be a money maker...Being the 'voice' of anything can prove lucrative, especially if the work is open-ended and on-going. I look at it as an opportunity to act and have fun (key word: FUN)."

By the way, when I speak to Siri "she" auto-corrects me and makes me feel like I have terrible diction. I was relieved to hear it when Jason told me it happens to him too, "all the time"!

WORDS OF WISDOM

Jason's advice for people wanting to get into voice-over work rings true with all professions: "DO YOUR HOMEWORK, i.e., read ads out loud all the time, listen to commercials and even imitate them. Get a decent mic and use it in a place that doesn't echo or pick up lots of extraneous noise. Many people take themselves right out of the running because of novice recording set-ups, you'd be really surprised." Jason adds even putting a towel over your head and speaking into a mic is better than risking an echo!

Jason's formula for getting work: "Talent + Appetite + Patience + Time = Employment."

Currently Jason has several commercials running on radio and TV, as well as several movies coming out later this year, including "C Street" with Dylan Walsh and Michael Gross. Jason plays the part of a Congressman.

PLUS: By the time this piece goes to print, Jason will have married my daughter Melissa. So, not only is he someone worth listening to when it comes to voice-over work, he's also my new son-in-law! **MB**

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A Haunted Wedding Adventure

WEIRD, WONDERFUL WEDDING HAPPENINGS

By Mike Ryan



August, 2015: It was a beautiful wedding in a beautiful outdoor setting near a 150-acre glacial lake with beautiful people...at a strange and spooky venue. The Punderson Manor State Park Lodge near Cleveland, Ohio features Tudor gothic architecture and enough paranormal activity to electrify the hairs on your arms!

The hotel is reportedly haunted by poltergeists who cause pencils to fly across rooms, doors to open and close and faucets to turn on and off. Also, several hotel employees have reported seeing an apparition dressed like a lumberjack hanging by the neck from a rope near a ceiling. After one hotel tour, a photographer found strange cloud-like formations on in a picture, which he hadn't seen

when he shot the photo, hovering around a participant who remembered feeling cold at that very moment.

The hotel, of course, plays up the spookiness by selling several books on the hauntings. There's even a terrifying looking gargoyle statue outside the hotel entrance. As you enter the lobby there's a display with several pictures of ghostly images in the hotel and stories about each one.

COINCIDENCE, OR...?

The bride and groom-to-be (who just happen to be my very own daughter and Jason Griffith, the voice actor profiled on the preceding pages) had made up an agenda for their guests that included a haunted tour of the hotel. However the bride didn't actually check to see what day(s) they gave the tour. She had it scheduled for Thursday and when she asked she was informed that the only day they gave the tour was...Thursday.

It got weirder. One of the hallways on the top floor of the hotel eerily reminded everyone of the movie *The Shinning*. Someone made the connection, realizing that the bride to-be's room number (cue scary music) was 237, which happens to be the number of a room where a particularly scary scene in the movie takes place. Plus all of the rooms had grainy old film looking pictures on the walls just strange enough to haunt your dreams.

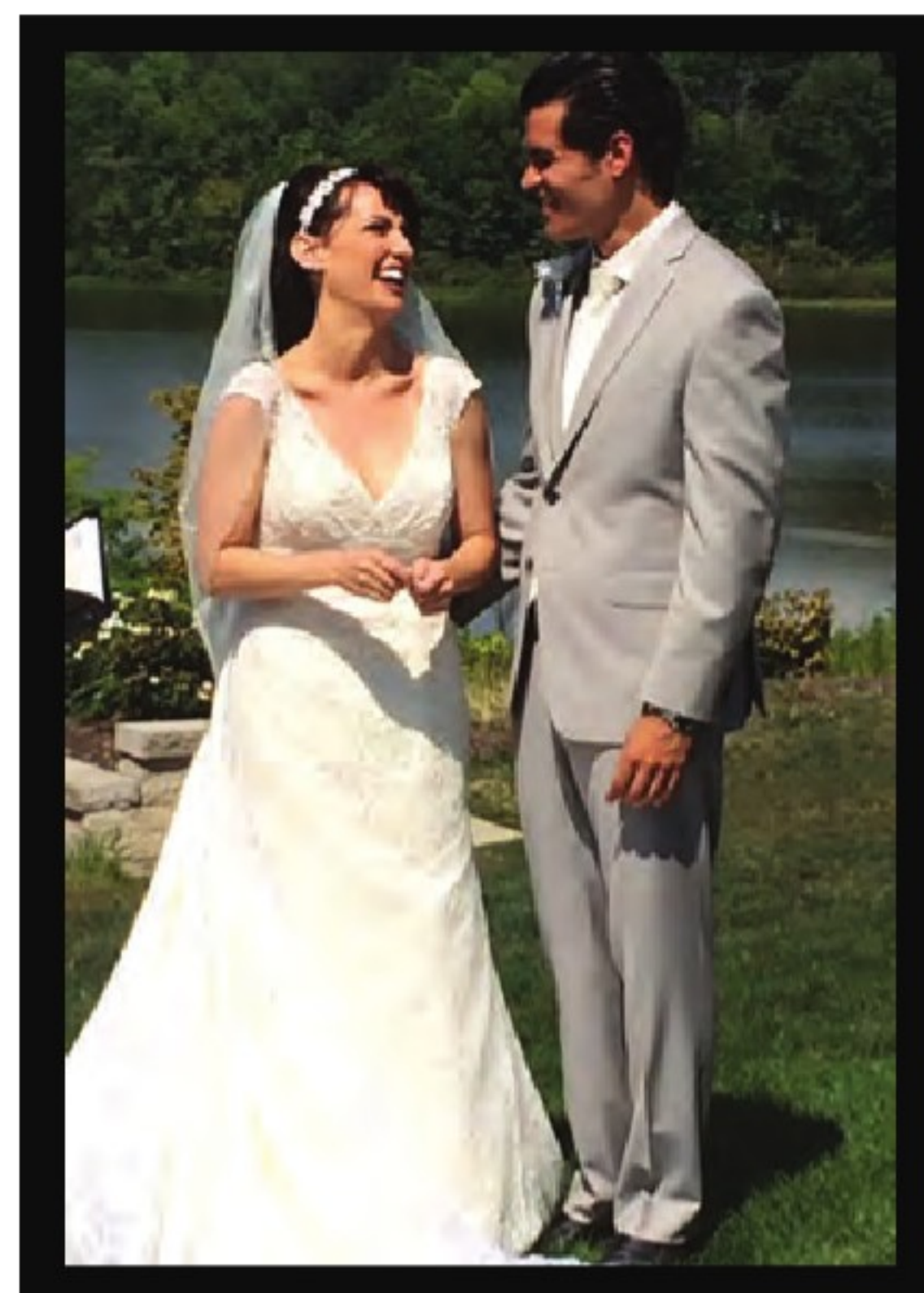
"YOU'VE JUST CROSSED OVER TO THE TWILIGHT ZONE..."

In 1959, season 1 of *The Twilight Zone* television show, episode 30 is titled "A Stop at Willoughby." There is an actual town of Willoughby in Ohio that is located about 40 miles from the hotel. It holds an annual festival inspired by the episode and this year's event was held on August 16—the day after the wedding.

Ghost stories are one thing, but it got very real on the first night of our stay. As we climbed into bed, the room's lights started flickered on and off several times before all the power in the hotel went out. The next day, an electrician working on the outage, suffered a massive heart attack and died (really!), may he rest in peace.

A NICE DAY FOR A...

In contrast to the ghoulish goings on around the location, the outdoor wedding itself was wonderful, with the lake backdrop and wispy white clouds overhead that looked like they were Photoshopped. The bride was stunning (if I do say so myself), the groom handsome



as ever, and the guests, most of who lived in the surrounding area, were some of the nicest folks you'll ever meet, with that down-home country charm that warms the heart. The DJ, Jerry Sabol, owner of J Sabol Entertainment, a multi-op in Cleveland, Ohio, rocked the reception with Elvis (the groom's favorite), disco, old school and lots of current hits for the youngsters.

Later that evening, after the party, my son was goofing around with a couple of flameless votive candles left over from the reception, by putting them on his eyes. His wife snapped the photo below, which turned out to be more than a little freaky especially since the candles didn't look anything like those in the picture.

And finally, on the last night before we all went home, we were "treated" to a dramatic and loud thunder and lightning storm—a fitting end to a strange and wonderful wedding adventure. **MB**



An App to Build Your Intelligence

DJ INTELLIGENCE GETS APP'D ON IOS AND ANDROID

By Marc Andrews

DJ Intelligence (parent company, Intelligence Inc), has released their Event Viewer app, which works in conjunction with a DJ Intelligence Pro account. DJ Intelligence has provided a website business management tool system for thousands of DJs since its launch in 2002. The overall system includes event booking, planning and management modules that can be added to a DJ company's website for \$100-200 per year, depending on the features needed.

For those who have stepped up their DJI tools to the "Pro" level, the Event Viewer apps for both Apple iOS and Android devices, this is a helpful addition to the service's expanded feature set. While this app doesn't allow you to edit your client details (though the developers say this is coming in a future release), it is perfect for looking up everything your client has put into their planning forms, along with other details from within your DJ Intelligence account.

In advance of an event, this is a great way to quickly check to see if your clients have filled in their planning forms, and if they haven't or you have a quick question, to send them a quick email via a link in the app. The app also aids you in prepping for an event, allowing you to check for any last-minute music requests, and you can use it for mapping (it will take you to your default mapping app).

At the event, app users can skip printing the planning forms and work directly off the app, or use it as a companion to mark off songs they have played.

Two features that I also found instantly important were the music charts (also published as the Mobile Beat Top 200 charts each year) being integrated into the app; and the event search, which I was able to use to look up upcoming availability for our staff.

All in all, a powerful addition to the DJ Intelligence ecosystem, which will make running a DJ business even easier for its users. With the promise of direct data editing through the app on the horizon, this might push those who rely on their smartphones for everything to take the plunge into the DJ Intelligence way of doing things. **MB**



rekordbox dj: a New Era for Pioneer DJ Software

Pioneer DJ has taken their rekordbox software to the next level by adding performance control to its powerful music library organization features. The new software, rekordbox dj, will be available from within the basic rekordbox 4.0 app by way of a subscription or a Plus Pack with extended video and FX functionality. It will also be bundled with the new DDJ-RZ and DDJ-RX controllers. (Check out the website below for a list of initially supported Pioneer DJ hardware.)

The software's GUI mirrors the layout of Pioneer DJ controllers, providing "instinctive, effortless control" of rekordbox dj's features. All the usual performance tools--Hot Cues, Sampler, Slicer, Sound Colour FX, Beat FX--plus Beat Jump and the industry's first Pad FX are onboard. Pioneer claims that the software has the "industry's lowest latency and excellent sound quality."

Other key features include: a multi-screen option and enhanced browsing, where rekordbox dj provides the option to split the GUI into two screens that can be toggled via the



space bar--one for browsing and the other for the performance features; performance with 2 or 4 decks; the new Pad FX that allows creation of multiple FX chains using all 16 pads. Much more information can be found at the page noted below.

www.pioneerdj.com/en/news/2015/rekordbox-dj/

Hercules Drives a Compact

Hercules has unveiled its latest DJ control solution, the ultra-portable DJControl Compact. With a footprint of just 13.4" x 3.9", Hercules boasts that "this controller makes no compromises when it comes to functionality, and is the most full-featured controller in its category."

Its shape makes it easy to carry the unit in any bag, including laptop computer bags, and the unit provides an extensive feature set, including: control loops, effects, samples and cue points using two sets of four pads. It allows you to tweak the sound of tracks using



the dual two-band equalizers (one per deck), and control the volume independently on both tracks. Scratching is even

possible, using the controller's dual jog wheels, (3" diameter each). All that's needed to get up and running with DJControl Compact is a computer (PC or Mac) with a USB port to connect the controller, speakers connected to the computer, and a music playlist.

DJUCED™ 18° (www.djuiced.com) mixing software is included with the controller. The app allows setting cue points, syncing two different tracks, creating loops, and saving mixes.

Hercules DJControl Compact will be available from October 2015, at a suggested retail price of \$69.99.

www.hercules.com

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MOBILE MOVIES

PART 3: GOING EVEN BIGGER!

By Ryan Burger

In the previous couple of issues, we have covered the basics of presenting “Big Screen Cinema” events, like how to go after the gigs, basic gear needed, licensing locally with the MPLC and Swank and more. Now it's time to raise the roof on big screen cinemas. We will cover **Going Big, Entertaining More and Serving More!**

GOING BIGGER

While stretch screens, truss screens, EZ fold systems and others are great up to about 15-20 feet across, if your goal is to truly replicate the big screen movies and drive-in theaters, the only way I know of doing it is through inflatable screens through companies like Open Air Cinema (www.openaircinema.us), a company that exhibited at the Mobile Beat Las Vegas 2015 event. (Read: a company interested in serving the mobile DJ market.)

Open Air offers everything from portable screen systems that you can carry on a plane (one of their newest offerings), to home systems with 9' wide screen areas that will cover enough for your home/family events, through 20' home systems designed for up to 300-500 people (but how are you going to fit that many people in your backyard?). The “Home” units, while inexpensive compared to the Pro and Elite screens, are exactly that, home units, not made for the rough and tumble that pro DJs presenting public events would be using them for.

The Pro and Elite Open Air screens are the ones that you would need to consider. They start in the 9' size, with a recommended size of 20', but go up to a 40' Open Air Elite system at a cost of just under \$16k. The recommended 20' size is just under \$6k and comes with the inflatable system, removable screen surface and the blower needed to keep it standing. The Pro systems, as compared with the home systems, will stand on their own in no wind or indoors, but I would recommend that you send lead wires up to the top and stake them down at diagonals at the bottom for best usage.

I was also amazed at the size of these screens when broken down. The 20' screen we purchased at MBLV19 fit into a big Santa Claus-style bag and the fan for it was smaller than a 12" powered speaker

and pulls less than 5 amps of power.

ENTERTAINING MORE

While sometimes it can be a hassle, having some entertainment before the movie starts is always recommended, and this is where your skills as a DJ can really come out.

If sundown is at 8:00 PM that evening for an outdoor movie, recommended setup time would be around 5:30, with the pre-show entertainment starting around 7:00. Your job at this point is to help to gather the crowd, especially if it's in a small town and you are the big thing happening that day.

Fun, interactive music, line dances, and basic games are your bets for entertainment. When you are about 20 minutes from show time, and the screen surface is just becoming viewable, show some old school cartoons like *Tom and Jerry*, *Looney Tunes* and similar. (Do your own research on legality of such, please.)

SERVING MORE

What else can you do? Just like when our company started offering game shows and video games at after-prom events, we were able to sell the clients on more services, such as DJs. You will get the attention of these groups and be able to bring in more business to fill your schedule just by serving them well.

But when it comes to serving them at the Big Screen Cinema event, more investment can bring more profits for you. What about an old-time popcorn maker or other carnival-style attractions like snow cones or cotton candy? You could rent them the hardware and sell them the supplies to create the total scene.

And what about things that just make your client happier with you that don't cost you much or anything to do? The most common service we provide for groups that work with us is designing and printing their movie promotional pieces. (While we have a copier that can do up to 12' x 18' slick posters, most would have to hire that job out.) Have your designer put them together just like a movie poster (ask Rachael or whoever your rep is at Swank for materials or just find them online) and make sure to put in a plug for your own company down at the bottom, since you know other potential clients will be seeing these posters.

So there you have it. If you choose to offer a movie service, you can provide a

great family atmosphere for a summertime outdoor event, or otherwise create big screen excitement for clients wherever they want it. Hit me up at rb@mobilebeat.com with questions or ideas that we might include in a future issue! **MB**

WHY THEY DO IT

These event organizers have shared a little bit about their motivations for hosting their movie events. Just some food for thought as you plan your Big Screen Cinema approach!

We offer "Movies in the Park" in Waukee to provide a unique and free family-friendly event for our citizens, which allows them to meet neighbors and other citizens with young children. We are utilizing Centennial Park in a way that hasn't happened before and getting people into our parks and engaging them, with the hope that they will come back to the park to play, have a picnic or to join one of our many other community events that we offer in the park.

We would encourage other towns to reach out to their citizens and get them interacting by voting on which movie to show. We have our citizens vote for each movie that we show throughout the summer. I think the community really likes the engagement and the kids feel like they had an important role by choosing which movie is shown. We have citizens vote online through our website and we promote the voting in our Program Guide and on our Facebook page.

– Danae Edwards, Waukee, Iowa, Parks & Recreation Department

We chose to do the movie projection for our student's Character Counts incentive because they voted for a movie party. Once they reached their goal we knew it would be so much more enjoyable to have the movie on the big screen!

– April Heitland, DCG North Ridge Elementary Principal

Plug In and Party

CHAUVET DJ has developed a series of fixtures that include a standard USB connection. Users can now wirelessly connect to all of them using the new D-Fi USB transceiver, a flash drive-sized unit that eliminates the need for any DMX cables. The USB transceiver is powered directly from the fixture. USB fixtures can be controlled using any of CHAUVET DJ's wireless controllers, or from a smartphone with the D-Fi Hub and FlareCON. D-Fi USB transfers DMX as well as master/slave signals between similar fixtures and is fully FCC/RTTE compliant.

www.chauvetlighting.com



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Major Atmosphere from Miniscule Lights

ASTERA LIGHTDROPS™ COMBINE WITH ASTERABOX™ TO GIVE MORE UPLIGHT BANG FOR THE PUCK

By Ryan Burger



Internationally, Astera has been involved with the DJ industry for years in lighting, but it now has a powerful combo of products and people in place to make an impact on the US market. Greg Hodges of Astera LED Sales (AsteraLEDSales.com, US-based dealer) wanted us to take a look at this product that he is so excited about and has been using for years. Greg has owned a disc jockey service for over 20 years, was on the leading edge of the uplighting business as it hit the wedding industry about 10 years ago, and has been working with Astera products for three years.

We got to check out four Astera Lightdrops™ and an AsteraBox™. The Lightdrops are wireless, battery-powered RGBW puck spotlights that are extremely small, compared to other manufacturers' lights. They are powered by a 15W CREE LED chip, and are wireless DMX controllable. The housing features only one plug on the back, holes for various mounting hardware, a plug for power, and a leg for adjusting the wash angle. These are elegant lights that fit in the palm of your hand; but for their size, they have some fantastic power. The Lightdrop also comes with multiple diffusion gels in the form of sheets that will give it a wider 30-degree flood and a 120-degree spread if you are lighting up objects from the inside. A strong magnet on the back of the unit also makes it perfect for downlighting centerpieces for weddings.

To control the Lightdrops, we took an AsteraBox (that is the middle-man between Astera lights and controller) and sync'd it to my Android device. The AsteraBox pairs up just like any Bluetooth device, simply by pushing the power button down for two seconds and having the app ready to connect. The AsteraApp™ is available for Android devices and worked quite well. Having instant control over the lights was very convenient. The built-in effects were very cool, and while I didn't use the lights in a full wedding environment, I can see how having the fades and color scheming with slow changes during the event would be extremely useful. Later in the evening, changing the pace of the color movement can help add energy to the event by making the dancefloor come alive from all directions.

I was impressed with how the AsteraBox takes its command workload off of the Android phone (or other Android device) in that the app on the Android doesn't need to be running all the time in case you need to do other things with it. The AsteraBox takes control and then basically keeps running its programming until the AsteraApp tells it otherwise.

In addition to using the AsteraBox for control, these lights can also be controlled by wireless DMX using their own controller or others (LumenRadio CRMX Wireless DMX or W-DMX), or an RF Controller available for under \$140. (We did not test these options.)

While Astera LED is also selling larger format can lights up in the \$1,000-\$1,800 range, the Astera's Lightdrop sells for only \$350 and its AsteraBox controller for \$335. Plus, there are even discounts and packages available for as few as eight lights. For more information on this great uplighting option check out the website or give them a call at 774-247-0437. **MB**

www.astera-led.com / www.asteraledsales.com

Built to Survive: The NuGuard KX

By Michael Buonaccorso



In Mobile Beat's continuing search for the best "armor" to withstand the heavy duty use and abuse mobile entertainers subject their gear and accessories to on the road, we run the gamut from looking at the biggest equipment cases to safety solutions for your phone. That search led us to the NuGuard KX for iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus.

The case is deceiving. In an earlier review of a different case, the protection was there but to such a degree that I broke the unit trying to get the phone out. No such problem with the NuGuard KX. The case uses something called "X-Orbing gel technology" which evenly distributes kinetic energy to provide massive drop protection. The result is a case that is lean, mean and equal to what you will find in a bulkier protective case. The case still allows easy access to all of the buttons, switches and ports on the iPhone.

The NuGuard KX case is available in four different colors: red, black, light blue ("blue") and dark blue ("midnight"), and comes with the NewerTech NuGuard KX Lifetime Limited Warranty and a "No Risk, No Hassle 30-Day Money Back Guarantee." More information and links to dealers can be found at the website below. **MB**

http://www.newertech.com/nuguard_kx/apple/iphone-6-and-iphone-6-plus/

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Ride the Lightwave

NUMARK SPEAKERS FEATURE UNIQUE LIGHTING ALONG WITH SERIOUS SOUND

By Ryan Burger

While the inMusic group just launched Marq Lighting (www.marqlighting.com) to complement their audio brands, including Numark, Denon DJ and Alto Professional, they have also revealed a unique hybrid product that was added to the Numark stable: the Lightwave Powered Loudspeaker.

This is a well-built powered speaker made for small to medium sized events where you are bringing in a lightweight mobile DJ rig but also want not only great sound but a little visual action as well.

Previously you might be bringing in a separate light bar type unit, but the Lightwave features LED lighting built right into the speaker cabinet, so you have it all covered together.

On the mobile side, each Lightwave unit has sturdy feet and handles, and weigh 23 lbs. For sound, they offer 200 watts powered by a built-in Class D amp pushing out to three 6.5" woofers and a 1" tweeter for the high end. Not an overwhelming amount of power but plenty for basic AV gigs like at the bar for trivia night where I most recently used it, or a smaller farmers market where they are just looking for some basic sound and announcements and more.

The inputs in the back include XLR/1/4" combo jacks, along with stereo RCA and 1/8" jacks. In the configuration I used at three different gigs, I was plugging my iPad or DJ controller into the RCA jacks and a microphone into the XLR plug and then linking it over to the second speaker in the set.

SEEING THE LIGHT

As far as the mini-light show goes, basically imagine an LED array or light bar going down each side of the speaker right next to the front grill and woofers. It has a very intense, solid glow to it that reminds me of neon. You can control the units to go to a mix of RGB, fades back and forth, beat-sync'd to the music, VU meter functionality and more. Obviously, it's not meant to be a full light show but it certainly adds some flair to the front of a DJ setup!

Overall, the Lightwave is a very cool option from Numark, and I'm looking forward to more of these combo units making it easier and easier for DJs to bring out a quick light show. **MB**

www.numark.com



Wireless HDMI: Let the Signal Fly

GEFEN WIRELESS HD VIDEO 60HZ TRANSMITTER AND RECEIVER

By Jake Feldman

Recently I had the chance to try out the Gefen 60HZ HD Video transmitter and receiver set. I can say the unit ended up being a champion for me. Here's how I got to that point.

Making it work is simple, yet there are a few things to remember. First, the transmitter and receiver are, of course, two separate boxes that are each powered by provided 5v power



physical way to fish signal cable through the ceiling. Other uses I can see for this device include video DJs (East Coast flat screen guys), game show DJs, and A/V rentals. Really, with a street price of just around \$350, the time saved with this piece is indeed worth every penny.

Gefen has made wireless transmission products for a great many years, so it comes as no surprise to me that this product really works well. Wireless HDMI is relatively new and until recently was unaffordable to many, but with it becoming the new standard in video on the pro and consumer level, rock solid solutions such as this are certainly welcome. **MB**

supplies. Then, the source signal is connected to the transmitter via HDMI input (up to 1080p resolution). For best results, put the source player or source provider close to the transmitter and use a 5' HDMI cable to "feed" the transmitter. The receiver also outputs a HDMI 1080p signal that goes into a TV or projector.

The transmit distance for the signal can be up to 33' which is perfect for those areas where you don't want to run cable, like high traffic areas or for low-impact installs in restaurants. **HOW IT WORKS**

The 60Hz is actually the frequency at which the transmission occurs—providing a surprisingly crisp picture without interference from WiFi or remotes in the facility or region in which you plan to transmit. The signal should be transmitted from a table or other sturdy location, and the receiver can be mounted on the back of a television or on a projection cart or bracket.

I used the device for two corporate presentations, and for one of my weekly trivia locations that features four flat-screen panels hung above a bar with no

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Actions to Attract High-Quality Wedding Leads

By Stephanie Padovani

All leads are not created equal. Anyone who has booked a nightmare client or struggled to convince someone about the value behind your price knows this to be true.

But how do you tell the difference? And where do you find the good ones? It's time to discover how to start attracting quality leads right now.

#1: CLEARLY IDENTIFY YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS

The first step is knowing who they are in vivid detail. Think of a couple who represents your ideal, the kind you wish you could clone and work with at every wedding. Or if you haven't worked with your ideal (yet) use your

imagination and write down their:

- Age, demographics, education
- Political affiliations, career, hobbies
- Schools they attended
- Affiliations and clubs they belong to
- Any other interests they have
- Wedding likes and dislikes
- Preferred types of music

#2: BECOME IRRESISTIBLY ATTRACTIVE TO YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS

Once you know who they are, you have the clues you need to attract them. Use words, images and messages that communicate clearly that you understand them.

For example, our wedding clients were typically opposed to participation dances. By declaring on our website that, "You won't have the Chicken Dance or plastic guitars at your wedding," our ideal clients immediately know they're in the right place.



You're not doing anyone a favor by wasting time with someone who isn't your **ideal client**.

Another popular wedding DJ attracts his ideal clients by suggesting playlists designed to appeal to them. A playlist including Bright Eyes and the Yeah, Yeah, Yeahs attracts a radically different couple than one featuring the Zach Brown Band and Lynyrd Skynyrd.

#3: ALIENATE EVERYONE ELSE

Doing a good job of attracting your ideal clients necessitates alienating those who aren't. You need to say, "no" to the clients you don't want in order to attract the ones you do.

The images and copy on your website can communicate this quite effectively. One wedding photographer features the photo of a bride's mud caked Jimmy Choo shoes at the top of her website. She knows that uptight, princess-type brides will be horrified by it.

An authentic tagline is another way to drive away the couples you don't want. "No group dances or plastic guitars." "Family-friendly entertainment for ages 5 to 95." "Fist-pumping, club-thumping dance beats." Each of these statements is definitive enough to drive away clients who aren't a match for what you do, while simultaneously attracting those who are.

#4: MEET THEM WHERE THEY HANG OUT

What other wedding businesses, schools, charities and organizations do your ideal clients frequent? These are ideal places to meet them. If you're not sure, ask your past clients and find out.

Attend bridal shows where these couples are present. Get involved with a business group or charity organization they belong to. Become a member of the board to show off your organization and speaking abilities, and you'll become the natural recommendation for wedding entertainment.

#5: ASK A QUESTION THAT IMMEDIATELY REVEALS THE QUALITY OF THE LEAD

You're not doing
anyone a
favor by

wasting time with someone who isn't your ideal client. Become skilled at identifying your ideal leads quickly with a qualifying question.

What question can you ask to reveal whether the couple is a good match for you or not? Depending on the description of your ideal lead, it might be:

- What have you liked and not liked at weddings?
- What is your venue?
- What's your favorite type of dance music?
- What experience would you like your guests to have at the wedding?

#6: ASSOCIATE WITH OTHER WEDDING PROS WHO WORK WITH YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS

Other wedding professionals who are already working with your ideal clients are an exceptionally high-quality source of leads. Where do these wedding pros hang out? Get involved and meet them there.

Join an association and become an active member. Make a point of meeting these individuals and become a friend, learn from them, and eventually earn referrals. Organize a mastermind group of like-minded wedding professionals to support each other.

#7: UPDATE YOUR BUSINESS IMAGE TO MATCH YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS

This is an often-overlooked element in attracting quality leads. A wedding DJ complains about attracting only budget shoppers, when a quick visit to her website reveals a cheesy HTML site, circa 1995.

If you want to attract high-quality leads, you must project the image to match them. This includes your website, logo and marketing materials, and even extends to your clothes and car. It doesn't mean you have to own a \$5,000 suit to attract six-figure weddings, but you will certainly need to look and act the part of a successful professional.

Describe your ideal clients, find them and irresistibly draw them like a magnet. The path to high-quality leads starts today! **MB**



Stephanie Padovani and her husband, Jeff, are the dynamic husband-wife duo behind Book More Brides, the #1 marketing resource for the wedding industry. Visit BookMoreBrides.com/priceshopper to learn "How to Position Yourself as a Valued Wedding Expert in Only Five Minutes."

The State of Insurance

AS THE ACA STANDS AFTER SCOTUS

By Mark E. Battersby

The U.S. Supreme Court, in *King v. Burwell*, ruled that the tax subsidies for health insurance provided by the federal government to citizens in the 34 states that have not established the health insurance marketplaces or exchanges were legal. That means some six million people, including the nearly 3.5 million people in small-business plans and small business owners, self-employed professionals and early retirees who depend on subsidized health care costs, will continue to receive them.

Unfortunately, despite those subsidies and other tax incentives, healthcare costs continue to skyrocket. And, according to a report from the Urban Institute, a Washington DC-based think tank, small businesses are among those most vulnerable to the steep healthcare cost increases.

THE ACA TODAY

Admittedly, the Affordable Care Act (ACA, aka "Obamacare") provides mobile entertainers and their businesses with insurance options, increased buying power via the government sponsored marketplace—and an overwhelming amount of confusion and paperwork. What can a DJ business owner do to keep healthcare costs manageable while complying with the ACA's updated and ever-changing rules?

First, it should be understood that the ACA's taxes and tax credits are based on the number of full-time equivalent employees (FTE) and their average annual wages, not solely on the number of full-time employees. In simple terms, FTE or "full-time equivalent" equals the total number of full-time employees plus the combined number of part-time employee hours, divided by 30. Seasonal employees, contractors and business owners don't count toward the total.

THE DOWNSIDE

Other than the sharply escalating costs, every mobile entertainer should be aware of the ACA's downside. Much of the negative impact of the looming "Employer Mandate," stemmed from employers reportedly cutting hours. Although the negative side effects of the ACA are very real for some mobile entertainment businesses many of the earlier radical claims were over-dramatized and simply used as political talking points.

Of those that are required to comply, only truly large businesses that don't currently offer benefits and employ many low-wage, full-time workers, face truly hard decisions. Those businesses offering higher wages typically already provide benefits, while smaller businesses (with between 100 and 50 FTE) will benefit greatly from not owing the fee on

the first 30 employees. So, a business with 100 FTE and 60 full-time workers will only owe the fee for 30 employees, assuming, of course, that they currently insure no full-time employees.

THE UPSIDE

It's safe to say the smaller the businesses the better the tax breaks. After all, the ACA provides small mobile entertainment businesses with affordable insurance options, cost assistance and increased buying power via the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP). Small businesses with fewer than 50 FTE employees can use the SHOP to get better deals on employee insurance, but aren't mandated to do so.

Consider a few of the ACA's other and applicable rules:

- Small mobile entertainment businesses can see up to a 50 percent reduction in their share of the cost of employee premiums. Employers with fewer than 25 FTEs, paying average annual wages below \$50,000, qualify for tax credits to help pay employee healthcare premiums. Employers with 10 or fewer full-time employees, paying annual average wages of \$25,000 or less, qualify for the maximum credit of 50 percent. The amount employers do pay is tax deductible and can be carried forward or backward.
- Form 8941, Credit for Small Employer Health Insurance Premiums, must be filed to claim the tax credit—all the way back to 2010, since the credit is retroactive.
- Thanks to the ACA, employers can offer more and better-quality benefits. In fact, because small businesses are able to shop for group health plans on their state's Health Insurance Marketplace via the SHOP, a mobile entertainment business now has the same buying power as larger businesses. Along with tax credits and increased buying power, many DJ company owners may now be able to provide benefits to their employees.
- The self-employed with no employees can get health coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace for individuals, but not through SHOP. And, everyone can use paper applications in lieu of the Internet.
- Retroactive to January 1, 2014, and through at least 2015, two percent shareholders in a mobile entertainment business operating as an S corporation can receive reimbursement for their individual health insurance premiums. Even better, the S corporation will not be subject to the excise tax penalty if it correctly includes the health insurance premiums on the two percent shareholders' W-2. The two percent shareholder must report the income as wages, but will be allowed to take a self-employed health insurance deduction.
- Effective for 2015, every mobile entertainment business providing



Mark E. Battersby is a freelance writer based in the Philadelphia area. His features, columns and reports have appeared in leading trade magazines and professional journals since the early 1980s. When not actually writing, Mark spends most of his time digging for exciting tax and financial strategies to write about.

self-insured health coverage to employees must file an annual return reporting certain information for each employee covered. This rule was optional for 2014.

- Last year, many small employers were shocked to learn that employee payment plans, plans under which they reimbursed employees for the cost of obtaining individual health insurance, violated the ACA rules, and they risked a \$100-per-day-per-affected-employee excise tax if they continued using the arrangements. The IRS recently provided guidance that clears up some of the earlier confusion.

- Don't forget there is an additional cost for some small businesses—an **annual** \$63 pre-existing conditions fee. However, the ACA small business fee decreases each year until 2017 when pre-existing conditions are phased out.



THE MEDICARE TAX HIKE

The Medicare Part A tax is paid by both employees and employers. Often overlooked however, is the fact that a mobile entertainer or business with profits over \$250,000 faces a 0.9% increase (from 2.9% to 3.8%), on the current Medicare Part A tax.

Since this tax is split between the employer and employee, they will both see a 0.45% increase. Small businesses making under \$250,000 are exempt from the tax. Employees making less than \$200,000 as an individual, or \$250,000 as a family, are also exempt.

OPTIONAL STRATEGIES

Instead of shifting to the individual markets, some businesses have opted for a high-deductible group plan and set up a health reimbursement arrangement (HRA) to help offset employees' medical expenses. An employer can dictate the expenses they will reimburse, thus limiting their out-of-pocket exposure.

The advantage of an HRA over a Health Savings Account (HSA) is that the plan can be structured so that if an employee does not use the money in an HRA, the money will still belong to the business. An HSA is another option, but it gives employers less control over how the money in an account is spent; the funds are made available to employees whether or not they incur any medical expenses.

2015, 2016 AND LATER

On the horizon is an excise Tax on High-Cost Plans (also known as the "Cadillac Tax") that kicks in for employers starting in 2018. Employers may have to pay up if their group health plans exceed a certain dollar limit. The limit for 2018 is \$10,200 for individual coverage and \$27,500 for family coverage.

For self-insured plans that exceed these limits, the employer will pay a 40% nondeductible excise tax on every dollar above

the limit. This penalty can be significant even for a plan that exceeds the limits by only a few hundred dollars per year, making now the time to think about changing an existing plan.

THE SUBSIDIES

Before the ACA became fully effective in late 2013, small businesses were much less likely to offer health insurance plans to workers than larger companies. In 2013, more than 93 percent of companies with 100 to 999 workers offered health coverage to employees, compared with just 32.3 percent with fewer than 25 workers.

Self-employed mobile entertainers and workers in small-businesses have, at least since late 2013, been able to buy subsidized individual health insurance plans on government-run exchanges. This has reduced the uninsured rate among non-elderly workers at businesses with fewer than 50 employees from 23.5 percent in June 2013 to 13.2 percent currently. The uninsured rate among self-employed workers fell from 30.4 percent in mid-2013 to 19.6 percent.

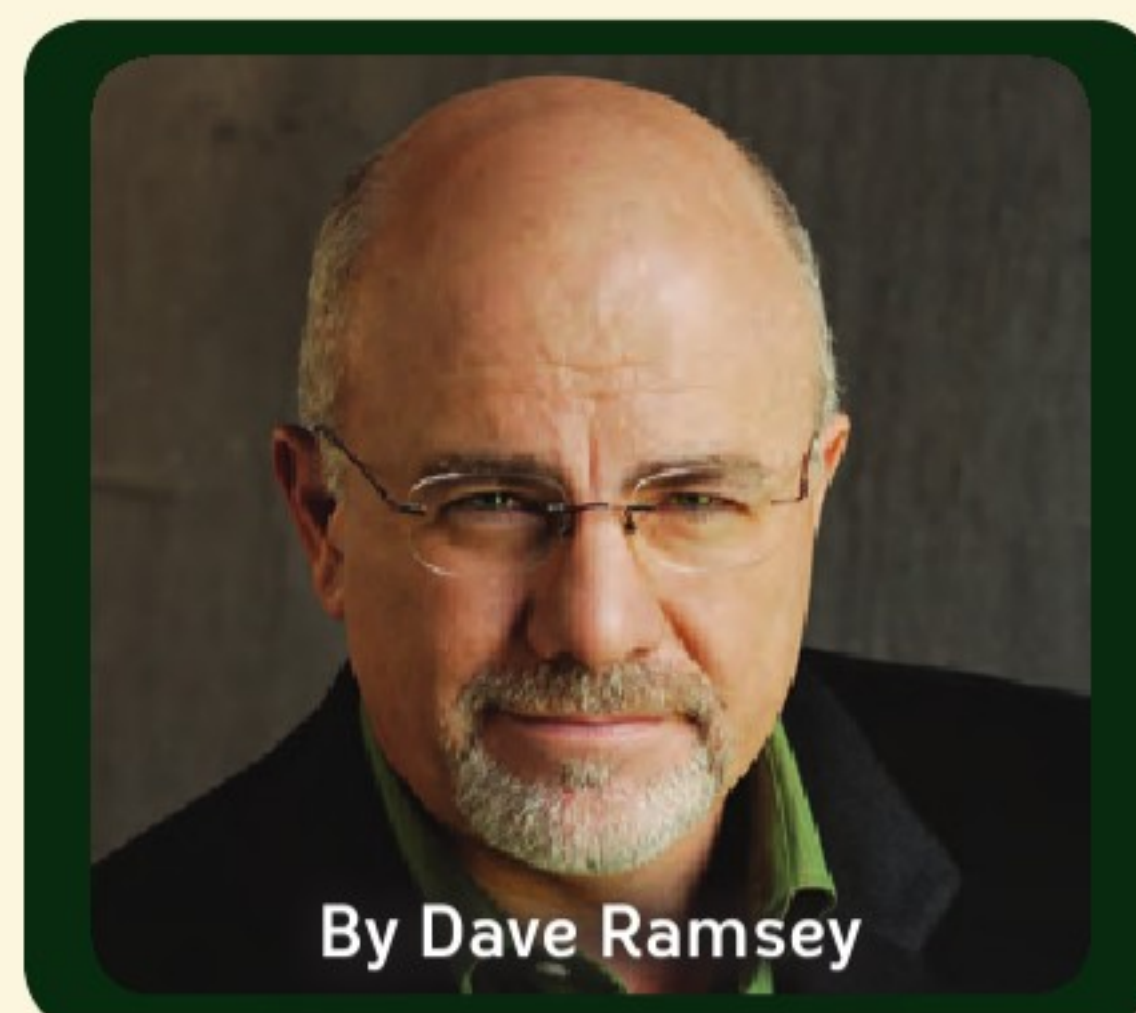
The subsidies, available to anyone who earns between 100 and 400 percent of the poverty level, have helped reduce the cost of insurance—at least until recently. Escalating insurance costs have already begun impacting businesses and others who do not qualify for subsidies.

While supporters of the ACA tout its success in providing insurance to millions of Americans, recent rate filings from large insurers reveal the law may have been built on a shaky foundation. In recent weeks, large insurers selling coverage under the ACA have proposed massive rate increases for 2016—some exceeding 40%—because they haven't been able to sign up enough young and healthy customers.

Skyrocketing healthcare costs are not, however, the only reason every mobile entertainer should seek assistance. The job of keeping abreast of the ever-changing rules, the ACA's potential pitfalls in order to reap its benefits, all cry out for professional help. **MB**

Your Raise Is Effective When You Are

**INCREASE PAY BASED ON PERFORMANCE
NOT JUST PRESENCE**



By Dave Ramsey



Raises are almost as much fun to give as they are to receive. Even after 20-plus years of running my own business, I still love how a team member's face will light up when they hear that they're appreciated—and that appreciation is being shown through an increase in pay.

At my company, we don't give out raises based on longevity. Just because you've been breathing air in the same building for another 365 days doesn't qualify you as raise-worthy in my book. But if you've brought value to the company, if you've made us money and shown yourself to be a valuable contributor—one who goes out, kills it and drags it home every day—you bet you're going to be rewarded.

Your team is filled with players holding varying degrees of tenure, talent and maturity. At some point, each and every one of them is going to have that Jerry Maguire moment where they say, "Show me the money!" Inevitably, some of these team members will deserve for you

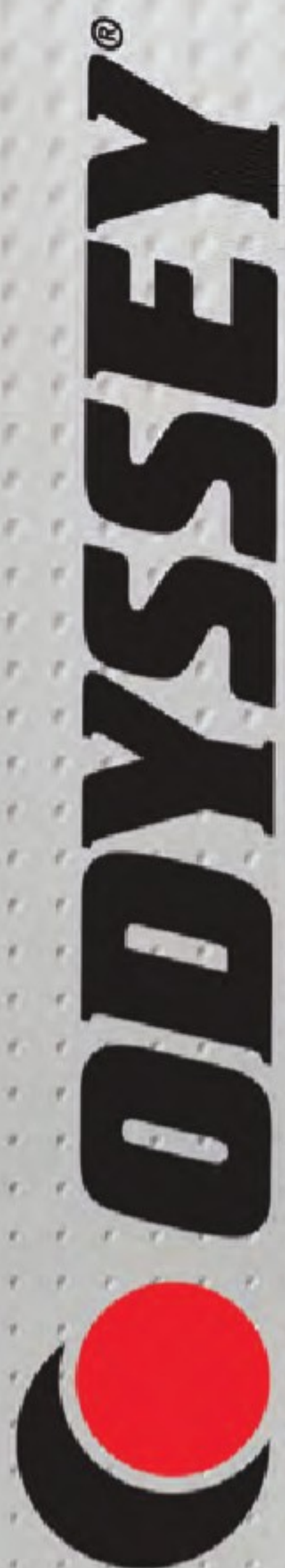
to be more generous. Others, unfortunately, will have an unrealistic view of what they've brought to the table.

I almost never cut a team member's pay due to poor performance. People are more than simple numbers on a weekly report, and as a leader you have an obligation to provide your team with everything they need to succeed. Sometimes, if a team member is underperforming, additional training or education is needed. Other times, a person may have personal issues outside work that require a little understanding, counseling and grace.

But for players who are consistent contributors year-in and year-out, raises should be given happily and with a praise sandwich. Praise the person and their actions and talents, give the raise, and praise the person some more. This is a time for celebration, because it's a true win-win scenario. The company wins because it has a truly valued and productive team member, and the player wins because they know they're valued and respected.

And that extra money in their pocket every payday doesn't hurt, either! **MB**

*Dave Ramsey is America's trusted voice on money and business. He has authored five New York Times best-selling books, including **EntreLeadership** and **The Total Money Makeover**. **The Dave Ramsey Show** is heard by more than 8.5 million listeners each week on more than 550 radio stations. Follow Dave on the web at www.entreleadership.com.*



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Why Do YOU Buy?

UNCOVERING YOUR OWN SECRET OF SELLING

By Jeffrey Gitomer

Think about the last few things you purchased: They hold the secrets to increasing your sales.

In one seminar, I was giving a stream-of-consciousness talk about buying motives and why people buy. As usual, I was focused on the customer side, the probable purchaser side, the buyer side of the equation. Then out of the blue I said, "Think of something that you just purchased. Why did you buy it?"

All of a sudden a one-million-watt light bulb went off inside my head. One of those instantaneous AHA messages. I discovered an answer, and it's an answer that everyone can understand.

If you list the last ten things that you purchased, you will discover the motives behind your own buying decisions, and at the same time, you will discover the formula for why others buy. Those "others" are your prospects, your potential customers, you know, the ones that you are erroneously trying to "sell."

When you list the ten items, do it on a spreadsheet. In the second column write down whether you needed what you bought, or just wanted it. In the third column, write down whether you could afford it on the spot, or you went over budget and had to charge it. In the next column, write down how you purchased. Did you go to them, did they come to you, or did you buy it online? If you bought it online you might want to enter what time of day you bought it. Interesting to note that a high percentage of online purchases are made after 8:00 PM.

In the next column, write down whether or not you liked the salesperson (assuming there was one). In the next column, write down the percentage of influence that the salesperson had in completing the sale—one being the low, one hundred being the high.

In the next column, enter your risk factor in making the purchase—one being the low, one hundred being the high. In other words, how much did you fear the purchase, and how much did you fear you were making the right purchase before you bought (usually the higher the purchase, home, car, the more hesitancy).

In the next column, write the word "price" or "value." If you went for price only, write price. If you went for value, the most, then write value. There's a caution here: only put the word "price"

if you went for the lowest price in the category, not the lowest price for the item. In other words, if you bought a BMW you didn't buy price, you bought value regardless of where you bought it.

In the next column, rate your experience by percentage, one being the low and one hundred being the high. One meaning "I'll never come back," and one hundred meaning, "I'll be back, buy again, and tell my friends."

Then in the final column, write a sentence or two about how it happened. The story. If it takes three sentences, make it three. But write enough so that you understand what caused you to make the purchase of the item, and then what caused you to make the purchase from that specific company for that specific product or service.

Now you have enough criteria to identify your own answers. Once you read over the spreadsheet you may find that you want to modify a few of them to get closer to your own reality.

Pretty simple so far, huh? Let's take it a little deeper.

Now it's time for the ultimate question: Would you buy from yourself?

When you finished buying were you happy? Did you find yourself saying it was OK, but...? It's important that you note all the "buts." The buts are the obstacle to your purchases AND your sales. Did you learn lessons each time you bought about what you promised yourself you wouldn't do again? Those are the same obstacles to your sales. And were there cases where you selected one vendor over another? Note those reasons because

those are the same obstacles to your sales.

Now let's go all the way to the bottom of the ocean. Compare the way you buy to the way you sell. How congruent are they? How compatible are they? Are you throwing up the same barriers that the people you bought from gave you? Are you missing the same nuances in your selling process that caused you to buy or walk away?

And so now it's time for the ultimate question: Would you buy from yourself? Unfortunately the ultimate answer is: probably not, and the reason is, you haven't modified your selling process to harmonize with the way your prospects buy.

There's a hidden treasure. Of course there is, when ever you go down to the bottom of the ocean, the object is to find the hidden treasure. The hidden treasure will be revealed to you when you go read (or re-read) *Acres of Diamonds* by Russell H. Conwell. All the sales-answers you need are buried in your own back yard.

You already possess the treasure. You just haven't discovered it yet. **MB**

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Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of 12 best-selling books, including *The Sales Bible*, *The Little Red Book of Selling*, *The Little Gold Book of Yes!* and *21.5 Unbreakable Laws of Selling*. His real-world ideas and content are also available as online courses at www.GitomerVT.com. For information about training and seminars visit www.Gitomer.com or www.GitomerCertifiedAdvisors.com, or email Jeffrey personally at salesman@gitomer.com.

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Making Change

CHANGE IS HARD...BUT IT IS POSSIBLE

By Jason Weldon

Why is change so hard for us? Google that phrase and you will see over 1 billion hits. And you will find over 1 billion reasons that you will never have time to read. So therefore, you don't bother, causing you not to change.

I like to think that change is directly correlated to moments in life. Think about it. If you don't need to change, you don't. No one ever really seeks out change until a moment in life forces them to change. Sure, we think about change all the time, but do we ever really do something about it? We may give it a shot, but then we see that there are 1 billion things that need to be done. So we just go back to the way things were. We just think about how great it would be "if" things were different.

I think for over 99% of us, we accept change only when a life moment tells us we have to. Then, whatever that change was, becomes our new norm. And the funny thing is, you are still all right. You still made it. You survived. Mostly because you didn't let yourself fail.

When I was a kid, my doctor told me I had asthma. I was about 10. He looked me straight in the eye and told me that if I ever smoked, I would die. I was terrified. He gave me an inhaler and told me to always have it with me no matter what. Now I was an avid sports player, I was outdoors all the time and I was a very active teenager. I swear to you, I never, ever once, needed to use that inhaler. I am convinced to this day that my mom came up with this plot to get me to never smoke. Well it worked. I have never smoked any kind of cigarette in my life. I still hear my doctor's voice in my head if I even think about it.

Even though I was 10, my mom knew that I would need her

help, and the help of others, to get through the ever-looming peer pressure to engage in smoking and drug use. And that is what I think will help you change more than anything else.

If you want your business to change, you need someone to call you out when you don't do all the things you need to do. You need someone to hold you accountable to the goals you have created for yourself. You need someone that won't listen to any of your excuses, but only wants one option for you and that is your success. I truly believe that another person's help can get you through some of the biggest changes you will need to make in your business.

Change for me over the last five years has been in hiring people. This was a really scary concept for me in the beginning. Not because they wouldn't work out, but because I was now welcoming new people into my craziness. And who would ever want to be part of that?! The answer, I found out, is lots of people.

I had to understand that most small businesses were just like mine. The new hire had seen and done it all before and just wanted a place that would allow them to grow. That's right: The employee wanted and expected change in the company. (On a side note, look up reasons why employees quit and you will find no growth as one of the leading examples.) Now I'm fanatical about hiring people. I want to generate more revenue, so I need to surround myself by

more people to help me change even more.

The next hardest change for me is going to be becoming a better listener. I have struggled all my life with this. Not just being a better listener, but acting on the things I am listening to. I can listen to what people say all I want, but I have to get better at the actions that need to come from listening. For instance, if people are telling me that they need more feedback from me, I have to hear them and then put a plan in place to make it happen.

What is the change that you need to make? What do you see that needs to be changed by the end of the year that would make you better? Go one step further and ask someone to share one change they think you could make. Then, find someone who can be your accountability partner. Someone who is going to make you walk around with an inhaler! **MB**



Jason Weldon is a wedding business consultant who specializes in small to medium-sized companies that want to grow their business. His objective is to help guide people through organizing their thoughts and laying the groundwork for a better, more successful start-up. He currently lives in Philadelphia and is also the president of Synergetic Sound and Lighting, Inc. and DJ and A/V company.



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